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new Masses

DECEMBER 24, 1935

The Liggett Assassination

THE use of the murder of Walter Liggett by United States Senator Schall, the wide national publicity given to what was probably merely a murder in the bootlegging industry, common enough in America, is only a sample of the fascist terrorism that will be used against a Farmer-Labor Party. Both locally and nationally, the Liberty League, the Law and Order League, the Citizens' Alliance and the reactionaries in the labor movement have used this underworld shooting as an attack on the Farmer-Labor Party. Liggett was a sample of the tragic deterioration of a sincere liberal. Disillusionment, personal animosity and gradual compromises had driven him into blackmailing and acts of individual anarchism. One-time publicity agent of the Non-Partisan League, formerly editor of Plain Talk, he had fallen into shady dealings with the underworld (lately under the guise of attacking Governor Olson), selling political plums, etc.

IT IS almost certain no one will be indicted for this murder. The involvements are too intricate. But it has served its purpose, to provide a means of discrediting the Farmer-Labor Party, to give excuse for the cry of violence and murder against the local liberal elements. Minneapolis is a powder keg. As the most advanced development of the Farmer-Labor Party, the local situation is a miniature of a coming national situation. Vigilante groups, violence and intimidation have been encouraged. As the crisis deepens, the elections draw near, this violence increases. Every weapon is utilized against the growth of the Farmer-Labor Party. The Minneapolis Workers' Bookshop has been raided, workers beaten and jailed, the criminal-syndicalism law has been invoked, the charter of Local 574 has been revoked, the Communist Party headquarters have been raided, the leaders have been threatened with tar and feathers, men have been killed on the picket lines. The Citizens' Alliance has threatened to move industry out. The police threaten to open Strutwear under the protection of the United States marshal. Strike leaders are up on federal charges of inciting to riot. A permanent grand jury is being established, an extra-legal measure to force workers to inform against strikers by compelling them to testify. Workers in mass meeting after meeting demand their civil liberties.

"SEE, BENITO? LIKE THIS!" *Russell T. Limbach*

THE killing of Liggett is being used in an effort to tear the Farmer-Labor Party to pieces. The Wall Street forces in the East, the Republican Party, Liberty League and others have seized upon it with audacity. The murder itself is indicative of the growing ruthlessness of these forces as their fear grows. The cry is "Minnesota is in the hands of gangsters. The Farmer-Labor Party is ruled by the underworld. Clean up Minneapolis." Under cover of such slogans, the reactionary forces can freely attack the liberal and radical and labor movements.

The Old Guard Loses Strength

THE past week witnessed sixteen more New York Socialist Party branches and the Young People's Socialist League rejecting the Old Guard. Of 36 branches voting, 26 now adhered to the new City Central Committee. The N.E.C. will be represented at the Utica Conference and will probably endorse the reorganized state party. Obscuring the real issues of the split—the collaboration with

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Roosevelt policies, the refusal to fight the La Guardia sales tax and the lack of any program against war and fascism—Louis Waldman charged that Normas Thomas was dividing the party because the Old Guard was determined to oppose Thomas as the 1936 presidential candidate. Waldman has not stated the fact of the situation which brought about the split. He and the others of the Old Guard have yet to explain their refusal to organize the unemployed, the acceptance of political appointments by Charles Solomon and Jacob Panken from Mayor La Guardia, the Old Guard's hateful Red-baiting campaigns and its attacks on the Soviet Union and its callous indifference to the need for a national Farmer-Labor Party.

Where Help is Needed

THE NEW YORK TIMES is making its annual proposal to solve the problems of the city's neediest at sums ranging from $300 to $1,500. The 1935 campaign for the hundred neediest cases seems more of a travesty on the realities of American life than ever before. Its only counterpart is the farce performed yearly in American jails and penitentiaries on Christmas Day when even wardens are suddenly transformed into dispensers of cheer and brotherly love—carefully surrounded by armed guards. Today, there are ninety-three long-term political prisoners in American prisons, among them J. B. McNamara, Tom Mooney and Warren K. Billings, the Scottsboro boys and men and women who will face their first Christmas in the penitentiary — the Gallup miners, the Sacramento defendants and the Oklahoma unemployed. The toll of long-term political prisoners increased in 1935 by more than fifty percent. In addition there will be hundreds in county and city jails. None of these men and women will find their way into The Times list of needy. These people don't want charity—they wouldn't accept it. They are proud of what they fought for, as their families are proud of their courage in the working-class struggle.

FOR the last ten years the International Labor Defense has conducted an annual Christmas drive for political prisoners and their families, under the slogan "They gave their freedom, give them your support!" All year round, the Prisoners Relief Department of the I.L.D. reaches its helping hand into the homes of America's political prisoners. The children need clothes, the houses need coal, the families must have roofs over their heads. The 1935 drive is under way at the present time, lasting until January 1, 1936, headquarters at Room 610, 80 East 11th Street, New York City. In addition to a substantial check to every political prisoner in jail and to his family on the outside, the I.L.D. sends a big box of clothing, shoes and toys. But the drive has a double purpose: not only to provide warmth and shelter for the winter but to replenish the relief fund which must function throughout the year. These people depend on the I.L.D.—for solidarity, for small comforts that make the endless monotony of prison days less dreary. They have fought in the class war, giving their freedom in the struggle against reaction and fascism. It is now imperative that their sacrifice is not forgotten, that the solidarity of those who support the same struggle goes out to the political prisoners and their families.

Unity Among Students

AMERICAN workers have strong allies in American undergraduates. The preservation of student liberties, the fight to widen educational opportunities and to increase relief for needy students is part of building the labor movement. While until now the two leading student organizations, the National Student League and the Student League for Industrial Democracy have welded their forces to combat violations of academic freedom and to invigorate the huge student demonstrations against war and fascism, they have lacked a broad organization which would facilitate joint action. In Columbus, Ohio, December 28 and 29, diverse campus groups will meet to establish the American Student Union, the name proposed for the new united student organization, to combat such incursions of student rights as have recently been occurring throughout the country.

ONLY last week the American Legion and the Hearst press have guided attacks on students, parents and teachers' organizations in New York City schools. A group of boys from Stuyvesant High School met in a classmate's private home to discuss their problems. Two policemen invaded the home, broke up the meeting and brought the boys before the school's principal. The administration head pretended innocence but in a careless moment stated that he had requested the police department to send two plain-clothesmen. At Townsend Harris High School, Sinclair Lewis' *It Can't Happen Here* and Heywood Broun's *It Seems to Me,* among other books, were ordered off the school library's shelves by the State Department of Education. At the University of Louisville, where a Macfadden-sponsored fascist youth congress was exposed by some faculty members, members of the local American Legion post have brought suit against President Kent and Professor Ellis Freeman. Dr. Freeman was charged with being a paid Moscow agent. It later turned out that the "Moscow gold" Professor Freeman was receiving was nothing but a dividend check for some Soviet bonds he owns.

Murder in Tampa

JOSEPH SHOEMAKER, militant Socialist, is dead, beaten to death by vigilantes in Tampa, Fla. He and two companions were attacked with chains and rubber hose and then hot tar was rubbed into the open wounds. Shoemaker's two companions are still in critical condition. The reason for the murder was an attempt by Shoemaker and his supporters to organize the Tampa unemployed. Last week the case was described briefly in THE NEW MASSES in an article, "Fred Bass and the Norman Case." In commenting on Shoemaker's death, The Lakeland Ledger connects the two murders—that of Norman and that of Shoemaker:

> According to the official who had investigated the work of a group formed here, Shoemaker took part in meetings conducted by Mrs. Frank Norman, whose husband was reported to have been abducted several years ago.

Norman's murderers are still at large. But the mob that kidnaped Shoemaker and the two other workers face the pressure of united action. Norman Thomas has demanded a federal investigation of the kidnaping and murder and of the complicity of local police and officials. The Labor and Socialist Defense Committee is bringing mass pressure to force the apprehension and punishment of those responsible for the death. Offering full cooperation, the International Labor Defense has contributed $100 and has urged its supporters to help the defense committee.

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Striking Against War

FOR the first time since the beginning of the Italo-Ethiopian war, a crew has walked off a ship docked in an Atlantic port because it was loading a cargo of scrap metal to be turned into Italian munitions. The S.S. Spero, owned by a Norwegian company and flying the Norwegian flag, was struck by sixteen seamen who after a few days in a Jersey City port discovered that not only were their wages to be cut, but that they would also have to ride an unseaworthy ship loaded to the decks with scrap iron for delivery in Genoa. The sailors charge that two of the Spero's plates were cracked and have been mended with cement which would never hold out in a rough sea. The Norwegian government as a member of the League of Nations applying sanctions has, by permitting the Spero to take the cargo, violated its agreement with other nations to stop all shipments of war materials to Italy. The crew, members of the militant Scandinavian Seamen's Union, has called on the International Seamen's Union to assist it in preventing the Spero from sailing. The Trade Union Commission of the American League Against War and Fascism, realizing that the Roosevelt neutrality proclamation is without teeth, is cooperating with all transport workers, longshoremen and the Spero strikers to set a precedent of applying unofficial sanctions against Italy. Atlantic ports have in the past few months been the source from which war goods have not only been shipped to Italy but also to Japan. The S. S. Spero strike is of great importance, since a victory will point the way for other ships in American ports.

New Masses Prize Novel

THERE are many literary prizes. The prize "safe" novel will in due time be selected by the Pulitzer Committee. Various publishers will award prizes, in many cases as merchandising devices. We have the pardonable conceit, however, to believe that THE NEW MASSES prize novel, *Marching! Marching!*, by Clara Weatherwax, which is being published by the John Day Company on December 30 will be in a truer sense a literary event than any other prize novel of this period. Up to a few years ago, serious novels about the life of workers were simply not being written and the mention of how a human being made his living was forbidden by a taboo more comprehensive than that surrounding the matter of how he came into being. *Marching! Marching!* is not only about workers, but about class-conscious workers. Workers have never been passive, although bourgeois novelists have known no kindlier method of presenting them. By showing the workers, active and militant, Miss Weatherwax added force to the realism of her fine book. We are glad to be able to announce also that THE NEW MASSES prize novel has been made the January selection of the Book Union.

The Signal

FOLK dances, folk costumes and knick-knacks and doodads for mantelpieces and end tables—that, for a long time, has constituted the awareness of American citizens to the culture of foreign-language groups in this country. That in many instances they each had a lively political and intellectual life and a lively literature of their own, has not been inquired into, especially since, in most instances, this more vital and contemporary cultural life tended to be proletarian and revolutionary and long antedated similar movements that are now sweeping the cultural life of the whole country. Proletarian literature, for instance, among the Yiddish-speaking groups, has long been the dominant literary movement. It is now stronger than ever and is attracting to its ranks writers formerly committed to bourgeois ideas and expression. Its chief literary vehicle The Signal, a magazine of Yiddish revolutionary literature with a circulation in excess of any similar magazine printed in English, is now under the editorship of a noted Yiddish writer, L. Miller. Its program is to present the revolutionary English-speaking poets to its large and eager audience: among the first will be Alfred Kreymborg's *America, America,* and other noted American revolutionary poetry and prose are in process of translation.

Reprisals in Brazil

INFORMED observers are convinced that although the anti-imperialist revolt in Brazil was apparently not successful in the cities, it is continuing in the interior in the form of partisan warfare. Facts are difficult to obtain since the government retains control over the means of communication, but clearly the Vargas administration has begun reprisals on a large scale. It has already thrown hundreds in jail, and apparently intends to exile the leaders of the revolt to the Island of Trinidade. To do so it would have to violate its own National Security Act of last April, which provides that political prisoners must serve their terms not more than 610 miles from their home towns. Trinidade is over 400 miles southeast of Rio de Janeiro, and the state of Rio Grande

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do Norte, where the revolt began, is 1,200 miles north of the capital city. The notorious, fever-infested Isle of Pigs, which in 1934 was condemned as unfit for human habitation, and from which all ordinary criminals were recently evacuated, will undoubtedly be reopened as a political prison.

THE anti-imperialist leaders who have fallen into the government's clutches need not expect that the provisions of the law will be of much avail to them. The radical student Tobias Varshovsky was murdered near Rio last spring after he had been arrested, and the offenders, obviously the police, went unpunished. Early this fall Geny Gleizer, a 17-year-old textile worker apparently without organizational connections, was arrested in San Paulo charged with being an agent of the Communist International, and was held illegally incommunicado for two months. Finally she smuggled out word that she was alive, having survived torture, but that she had been violated by a police guard while in custody. The storm which this disclosure aroused caused the government to search for a pretext by which it might deport her to Rumania where she was born. The captured leaders of the anti-imperialist revolt need expect no better treatment than that accorded Varshovsky and Geny Gleizer, unless protest from abroad stays the hands of these tools of British and American imperialism.

Tokio the Insatiable

WHILE the British and French governments have been plotting to partition Ethiopia, Japan has increased the tempo of her advance into North China. The territorial grab is politely described by the Japanese as a move to give the provinces concerned "autonomy." It is also a convenient ruse, which has received Chiang Kai-shek's blessing, to allow Japan to encroach on new territory without being guilty of "aggression." Japan is desperately in need of new markets and new territory which might yield valuable raw materials. The ore, the agricultural products sought in Manchukuo have not fulfilled Japanese expectations: North China is fertile, has valuable mineral deposits and experiments in cotton growing indicate that this region can be developed to produce enough cotton to supply Japanese textile mills. Aggression, under the convenient camouflage of granting "autonomy," is given added impetus by the cynical move of the Western imperialist powers to bolster Italian fascism by dividing Ethiopia, a move interpreted by Japan as approval for any hard-pressed major imperialist power to improve its economy by annexing territory by force of arms. The Japanese government is assured of no interference by Chiang Kai-shek—he has been bought in the past and has indicated his willingness to be bought again.

To support the struggle against Japanese invasion, a national student strike was called in Peiping, and Chiang Kai-shek's police murdered ten strikers protesting Japan's aggression. The Chinese masses have brought such pressure to bear that despite Chiang Kai-shek's and his Nanking government's willingness to take no stand against Japan, some of the members of the government are joining the anti-Japanese forces and to clear themselves may yet be forced into supporting armed resistance in North China.

Japan refuses to play a subtle diplomatic game of gradual penetration. Manchuria was won by armed force; now the plan is to march directly into North China. The Japanese have seized Kalgan, the controlling link of the caravan route between the Soviet Union and China. Pravda points out that the invasion of North China is necessary as a preliminary action to any campaign against the Soviet Union. "This dual character of Japanese imperialist aggression is due to the economic, strategic weakness of Japanese positions. Any serious preparatory step toward a 'big war' in the North imperatively demands additional financial and raw-material resources, new markets, plunder and an expansion of the colonial spheres of influence."

John Strachey has commented on the Hoare and Laval attempt to force a realignment of the League of Nations in preparation for a concerted imperialist attack on the Soviet Union. In view of the Soviet's well-equipped and highly-trained army, Japan no longer dreams of attacking alone. But if British and French imperialism will support Hitler Germany in a drive toward the East, Japan will consider it high time to advance against Siberia. The important consideration at the present moment is to procure a base and a reservoir of supplies—which North China can provide. And there is also Outer Mongolia where despite the commission set up to settle boundary disputes between Outer Mongolia and Manchukuo, a border incident might set off a new world war.

The paradox facing Japan is that even though Western imperialist nations approve an attack against the Soviet Union, the necessary preparation—invasion of North China—also infringes on these powers' interests. Both the United States and Britain have protested the latest Japanese invasion. Japan has attempted to smooth over such difficulties by pointing to the powerful Red armies in the interior and by promising to launch a campaign against them—a move Chiang Kai-shek is willing enough to endorse. But though Britain and America heartily approve such a plan, Britain in particular is faced with the problem of allowing Japan to gain too great strength in the Orient and losing valuable concessions and spheres of influence. And Japan, despite promises, is not too anxious to attack the Chinese Soviets. Not only would the campaign be dangerous and very likely disastrous, but the mass movement in China has reached proportions that threaten to involve Japan in a long drawn-out conflict at any moment.

The rising resentment against Japan's invasion has rallied tremendous popular support to the anti-Japanese groups in China. And in this country, General Fang Cheu-wu has stated his intention of returning to China and rallying these forces in a determined stand against Japan. General Fang was arrested and imprisoned for one year by Chiang Kai-shek. He represents the determination of the Chinese people to resist foreign imperialist encroachment—in direct opposition to Chiang Kai-shek's willingness to grant territory so long as he receives personal payment and benefits. Japan must face an aroused China. Chiang Kai-shek can no longer prevent resistance to aggression. And Japanese imperialism, forced by a rotting economic system at home to plunder new territory, is fast reaching the stage when by attempting to preserve itself, it must speed its own doom.

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THE ROAD TO ROME

William Gropper

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The Split in Britain's Ruling Class

JOHN STRACHEY

LONDON, Dec. 16.

WHEN I wrote last week on the Hoare-Laval deal, I did not know the half of it. Day by day during the last week one revelation has followed another until today the whole project stands revealed as incomparably the vilest act of capitalist diplomacy in recent years. And one cannot say more than that!

The revulsion, loathing and abhorrence with which the scheme has been greeted in this country cannot be exaggerated. Pressure upon the government is intense. It is hardly too much to say that on the one side stands the whole nation and on the other side not even the whole Cabinet but an inner governing clique within the Cabinet, which I understand is really responsible for the deal. We must, however, analyze the important division which has arisen within the British governing class more carefully than that. For the British governing class is for the first time in many years profoundly divided over an issue of first-class importance.

It is now possible to see the lineup. On the one hand stand the forces which put through the deal. They are led by Baldwin and his political family of close associates of which Hoare has always been a leading member. They have the ignominy of being supported by the Rothermere and Beaverbrook presses and by Mr. Garvin. This group evidently believes Italian fascism must be saved at all costs. Moreover, as the extremely significant news of the new negotiations begun in Berlin indicates, it is determined that a policy of full support for Hitler and the reorganization of the League on an anti-Soviet basis must be put through. With these supreme objectives in view, the members of this group do not count the cost.

On the other side stands a numerically much larger section of the governing class. This section has the sympathy of many of the minor members of the Cabinet, the great majority of the House of Commons and it is evidently being led by The London Times. Moreover, it represents, I should say, 90 percent of ordinary middle-class opinion in this country—the type of opinion on which this government depended wholly for its successes at the recent election. This section of the governing class is appalled at the cost of driving through the Hoare-Laval line of policy. They see that it involves:

1. The total and irredeemable wreckage of the League of Nations and that this is madness for those powers which like the British Empire have nothing to gain by war and have a world to lose.

2. The beginning of the breakup of the British Empire. Dispatches from the Dominions leave no doubt that the breakup of the League of Nations would involve a long step towards the dissolution of the ties between the Dominions and Britain. For these Dominions, as The Times on Monday reminds its readers, are themselves amongst those small nations who feel themselves abominably betrayed by Hoare and Laval.

3. A shattering blow to Anglo-American relations. For the first time, America has abandoned the policy of insisting on the freedom of the seas, a policy which has several times brought her to the verge of war with Great Britain. But as The Times' Washington correspondent said openly on Monday, so great is the disgust in America that she will now probably revert to insistence on the freedom of the seas policy.

4. Last but not least, the Hoare-Laval policy has already produced an unparalleled wave of disgust with the National Government in this country. Responsible leaders of the governing class realize that any policy which evokes such a volume of popular protest is disastrous to their long-term interests.

These are the substantial reasons which have forced powerful interests within the leading ranks of the governing class to come out in real opposition to the government. This does not mean of course that their indignation and disgust over the Hoare-Laval deal is not genuine. No one who is not utterly past redemption can avoid feeling acute nausea now that the full terms of the deal have been exposed.

The latest revelations include an effort to blackmail the Emperor into accepting the terms revealed in Sir Samuel Hoare's dispatch to Addis Ababa, and the crowning treachery that after the Emperor had accepted the terms he was then to be told that he could not build a railway to the port he was supposed to have been ceded! Indeed, we make a mistake if when analyzing as we must the contradictory imperialist interests which are dividing our opponents we do not also allow for the fact that a point has now been reached at which no man in whom human decency is not totally extinct can possibly support the policies pursued by their governments.

We must take this ideological moral factor superimposed on the conflict of interests into account. For these are the terms in which the average Englishman and American of all classes sees the conflict. Moreover, the situation has now arisen in which the main duty of a revolutionary has become the simple task of insisting upon elementary principles of honor and honesty, on the defence of peace, democracy and the standard of life. We have the opportunity of mobilizing irresistible forces for the defence of these things. And these forces will find—indeed they have already found—that the defence of these elementary principles brings them into irreconcilable conflict with any and every capitalist government. The immediate task for the British Left is to direct the immense pressure which is being exercised upon the government on to the critical points. Everyone who is in touch with the situation agrees that the two critical points are first, that oil sanctions must be imposed and second, that Sir Samuel Hoare must resign.

If these two things can be forced upon the government, as they can be, the effect of the Hoare-Laval deal can be made the exact reverse of what its authors intended.

(These cable dispatches by John Strachey are appearing weekly in THE NEW MASSES.)

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The U. S. Army Gets Its Orders:

"Shoot to Kill" in Strikes, Says Gen. MacArthur's Manual

GEORGE SELDES

THE War Department of the United States is preparing to use every old and modern instrument of murder against American labor.

It expects to enlist the American Legion against American workingmen whenever the owners of industry call for bayonets.

In the future federal troops and their colleagues, the guardsmen, vigilantes and legionnaires must never fire a round of blank shots as a warning but must proceed immediately by killing workingmen with gun and bayonet.

The constitutional right of habeas corpus will not be respected by a commanding officer if it is issued by a state court.

"Mistakes" made by officers, i.e., the murder of workingmen, will go unpunished as "honest errors of judgment."

Troops are encouraged to be ruthless, to employ violence, to use the machine-gun, to shoot, stab, wound and murder.

The War Department places property above human lives.

Moreover, the War Department officially recognizes that a class war exists in America. And it takes its stand clearly in this class war on the side of wealth and recommends the destruction of the small holdings of the poor rather than the property of big business and the rich whenever federal troops go into action.

The foregoing statements are not the ravings of a maniac; they are a restatement in plain English of General Douglas MacArthur's latest official pamphlet of suggestions on "Military Aid to Civil Authorities," issued August 1, 1935, signed by the Chief of Staff and bearing the Imprimatur of "E. T. Conley, Brigadier General, Acting The Adjutant General." Anyone who doubts these facts can write to the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C., enclosing ten cents in coin and asking for "Basic Field Manual. Vol. VII. Part Three. Domestic Disturbances."

"Domestic Disturbances" is the magnificent euphemism the War Department uses in its official instructions to the forces of law and order on the use of violence against labor in America. It is quite true that General MacArthur illustrates domestic disturbances with five typical examples, the first of which is "a riot in a penal institution," the second "a mob determined upon lynching a prisoner," but he gets down eventually to the main subject, giving examples of strikes, labor disturbances and even picketing. Thus, page 63 of the manual, he quotes from a report made to him "covering the use of chemical agents in a strike during 1933":

> In conclusion, wish to state that all efforts should be made when the use of gas is contemplated to supply plenty of it. It certainly has a far greater effect on civil disturbance mobs than physical force, display of weapons, or show of force.

There can be no doubt about it, the War Department is prepared to shoot without warning, to employ not only machine-guns and the bayonet, but two kinds of gases and tanks and at times airplanes against "the pickets and strikers" it encounters. Moreover, this manual of instructions to federal officers is also the guide book to the national guards and militias in every state in the Union and it is also the handbook of the private militias of the coal and iron companies and other armed business forces throughout the country. Careful reading of this manual is a complete enlightenment on all the acts of violence and terrorism committed in the past two years by the forces of law and order (so-called) in San Francisco, in Toledo, in Ambridge, in Bridgeton, New Jersey, in Rhode Island, in the South, everywhere in the United States when the militia, the National Guard, the vigilantes, the American Legion have gone into action.

And ironically enough, it is also the explanation of the last important use of the federal troops against "domestic disturbances." When they attacked the members of the American Legion and other veterans of the World War at Anacostia they used exactly the same methods for which they now ask the American Legion's assistance against "domestic disturbances" of pickets and strikers.

The "shoot to kill" order is given on page 18 of the manual: "Blank cartridges should never be used against a mob, nor should a volley be fired over the heads of the mob even if there is little danger of hurting persons in rear. Such things will be regarded as an admission of weakness, or as an attempt to bluff, and may do much more harm than good."

It is this official United States government, war department order which explains the actions of the National Guard. Thus the echo of it is heard in the testimony of Brigadier General Seth E. Howard of the National Guard of California before the House Committee on the War Department Bill hearing. General Howard did not include riots in penal institutions and lynchings in his defense of violence; he was honest enough to admit that this was his policy in dealing with labor. "It must be with a rifle and a bayonet, cold steel. . . ." The general testified: "Troops to be effective must be armed with rifles because a pistol is no arm to place in the hands of troops with these groups of disturbers that we are confronted with in the country today. Neither are clubs. It must be with a rifle and a bayonet, cold steel . . . I want to advise you that today I have my troops under arms, in violation possibly of the regulations of the National Guard Bureau."

In addition to the rifle and bayonet, cold steel, General MacArthur takes advantage of all the inventions and discoveries which a beneficent science has given to mankind.

"Aviation. Airplanes may be used for the purpose of keeping rioters off roofs by means of machine-gun fire and, in conjunction with other arms, by dropping tear-gas and high-explosive bombs.

"Artillery. The manner of using coast artillery in riot duty would depend upon the equipment, any special training and availability of a particular organization.

"Cavalry. Because of its mobility and the undoubted moral effect of an armed man on horseback, cavalry will always be a valuable and effective adjunct to any command employed in riot duty.

"Hand Grenades. Hand grenades, especially those filled with chemicals, will be quite an essential part of the equipment. *Experience* in the use of tear gas in hand grenades by the *National Guard and civil police* [the italics are not mine but those of the Chief of Staff] has demonstrated its practicability and efficacy in handling mobs without loss of life.

"Infantry. Infantry should and will invariably constitute the major part of any command employed in suppressing a domestic disturbance.

"Machine Guns. Machine-guns will be required in about the proportion now issued to an infantry regiment.

Personal Note

To Douglas MacArthur: When you were a colonel in the American Expeditionary Force in France I was attached to your division as a war correspondent. I wrote those stories about your bravery and how you won all those medals. I also reported that speech to your troops in which you said war wasn't murder because bloodshed was justified, in a noble cause, making the world safe for democracy and all that bunk.—George Seldes.

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"Tanks. There will be many cases where tanks can be used to good advantage. Certainly the moral as well as the physical effect of a tank bearing down upon a mob will do much toward breaking up the mob.

"Miscellaneous supplies and equipment. Shotguns, using charges of buckshot, should be issued to a section of the command. For operations in a city an extra supply of axes, picks, sledge hammers, crowbars, and rope will be of value."

WHAT about the American Legion? Take for example Ambridge, 1933. There can be no doubt of what happened here as an ordinary commercial newsreel showed it plainly to the great American public until such a time as orders came to suppress it. It shows a group of striking workmen several of whom carry sticks or barrel staves, but not one of whom is armed with a dangerous weapon. The worst that these men did was talk out loud. The newsreel then shows an armed force advancing with rifle and bayonet—cold steel. The leader of the armed force orders the men who have committed no law violation to disperse and although the striking workingmen do not throw stones or use their sticks, the forces of law and order attack them without warning, beating up the strikers and finally firing their rifles and murdering one of them.

The attack was made by 200 men recruited and deputized by the sheriff of Beaver County, Charles L. O'Laughlin. Among the attackers were American Legionnaires. Testifying before the governor's commission on special policing in industry in Pennsylvania, Sheriff O'Laughlin said:

"I immediately got William Shaffer, who was commander of the American Legion Post in Aliquippa, which is my home town. . . . I asked Mr. Shaffer if he could get me seventy-five boys with military experience. He told me, 'Charlie, I'll get you a hundred and fifty if you want them.' He did produce seventy-five men, whom he gathered together in the Aliquippa police station. . . ."

In all the history of labor violence in America there are few such documented instances of the forces of "law and order" being guilty of murder, as in the Ambridge case. The 200 men under Sheriff O'Laughlin committed at least one murder, and of these 200 men who engaged in violence, almost 50 percent were members of the American Legion.

And this is exactly the wording of the War Department's manual on how to enlist the American Legion against labor:

Page 25. Section 61. "Duties of the military commander. In his efforts to understand the situation, the commander must set out at once to gather information which should normally include the following. . . .

"(b) Much of this information may be secured from the police department, supplemented by private detective agencies, railroad detectives [sic]. . . .

"(3) The location of the headquarters of the American Legion and other local organizations representing law and order [sic]. The meeting places, strength, attitude, etc., of the members of these organizations should be ascertained, and a conference with their commanders or leaders should be arranged.

"(6) The attitude of the public press must be learned and conferences arranged with newspaper men. . . ."

The Ambridge strike—and murder—is an example of the cooperation of the armed forces and the Legion in violence; the San Francisco strike is an example of the cooperation of the press with the military authorities in fighting labor.

The entire history of the industrial age in the United States gives nothing but proof that the press of this country has generally been unfair to labor. Every honest and impartial investigation has added to this proof and the most important evidence is contained in the two-volume report issued by the Interchurch World Movement, Bishop Francis J. McConnell, chairman, on the Pittsburgh steel strike of 1919. This report proves absolutely that every newspaper in Pittsburgh was unfair to labor and that most of the reports sent out of Pittsburgh to the metropolitan press were unfair to labor.

But it remained for the publishers of the San Francisco newspapers actually to conspire against labor. This conspiracy, which cannot be detailed here, was, moreover, reported with loud acclaim and rejoicings in the weekly organ of the organized publisher, The Editor & Publisher. The point to be emphasized is that the press generally is unfair to labor and that the guidebook to the militia, national guard and federal officers on how to fight labor advises the officers to cooperate with the newspapers of the country, most of which are already notoriously anti-labor.

NECESSITY knows no law. And on page 6 this ancient motto is recommended to the forces of the law. In cases of emergency, the manual advises, "so imminent as to render it dangerous to await instructions requested through the speedier means of communications, an officer of the Army may take such action, under the law of necessity or self-defense, before the receipt of instructions as the circumstances of the case may justify, and will promptly report his action, and the circumstances requiring it, to the Adjutant General, by telegraph, if possible, for the information of the President."

The War Department manual therefore creates the following situation: the officers may take action without instructions and they must shoot to kill without first firing a warning round. In these circumstances naturally there will occur considerable bloodshed and murder, many instances of which are "legal" from the War Department point of view, but other instances which the department may consider "accidental." It therefore provides:

Page 11. Par. 19: "Palpable illegality of the order. Ordinarily a military subordinate incurs no liability for an act done in good faith in obedience to orders from superior authority, but the order is no defense if its illegality is so palpable as to be immediately apparent to a person of average intelligence.

"20. Excessive or malicious violence. Troops have a right to use such force as is necessary to carry out orders and to accomplish their military mission, and individual officers and men are not liable for honest errors of judgment in determining how much force is necessary in a given emergency, but unnecessary violence applied with malice or recklessness may subject the responsible individual to liability, civil or criminal or both."

If ever there were an invitation to violence issued by a government department, it is the foregoing. You may attack a peaceful demonstration, you may fire into peaceful strikers, you may shoot and kill peaceful pickets, and if you are an officer charged with murder all you have to prove is that it was "an honest error of judgment" and all will be forgiven.

A federal officer can also beat the constitutional right of habeas corpus. Full instructions are to be found on page 8. And the following page contains the cheerful information that "a proclamation is not legally necessary for the exercise of martial rule." In fact, no method or means of circumventing the Constitution of the United States is omitted in this brilliant little guidebook for the constitutional forces.

One more revelation by the War Department's manual must be mentioned:

> b. Troops will be disposed with the object of . . .
>
> (2) Driving the mob into or through the districts of the city where looting is the least profitable and where destruction of property incident to military operations will be reduced to a minimum and preferably fall on the rioters or the class of people composing the rioters. . . .

But, the reader may argue, there are no classes in the United States. The interests of employers and employes are identical. All men are free and equal. The objectives of capital and labor are the same. There never has been and never will be a class struggle, at least, not in America.

Well, the reader may argue as much as he pleases, the War Department knows differently. There is class warfare in the United States, and the War Department knows on which side it stands. When labor fights for its rights, when there is a demonstration or a strike, when armed force is used to quell unarmed men, the forces of law and order will see to it that the property damage involved in their use of violence is confined to the quarters of the working class.

The War Department proves to us that it at least is class conscious.

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Il Duce's Labor Racket

JOHN L. SPIVAK

VIENNA, Dec. 5.

THE MOST charming thing about all of Italy's big labor leaders is that every one of them can point to a father or a grandfather who had been a worker. So far as the smaller labor leaders are concerned their function, as near as I was able to figure it out after talking with many of them, is to keep the big leaders informed of the unrest among the workers lest it become too extensive and show itself in overt acts. Trifling matters like wages and working conditions are as far from their worries as the heating system in the Eskimo igloo.

In not one industrial area that I visited did I find an important union leader who had been a worker! They were simply members of the Fascist Party who directed union activities in accordance with orders passed down from above, orders which depended upon the political need of the moment, whether it was necessary to placate workers or employers at that particular time. The welfare of the workers did not even enter into their calculations.

Fascism is very proud of the fact that everybody is organized. That, they point out, shows what fascism has done for the workers. But when workers are fired or imprisoned for protesting too loudly against wage cuts and impossible working conditions the other workers learn that it is healthier not to discuss conditions and wages even in their union meetings. The workers as well as even important labor officials like those at the head of all labor unions in a province are equally fearful. So I went to the spacious buildings across the street from the American Embassy in Rome, where all labor union activities in the land are centered in the headquarters of the Confederation of Labor. Men and women who had never worked in a factory or mill in their life, from there direct the fate of almost 3,000,000 "organized" industrial workers.

The place bustled with activity. Labor officials high and low entered and left offices to the click of heels and hands raised in salute. Not even messengers delivering inter-office memoranda failed to pause in doorways, click heels and salute before tendering the memos. Professors and learned assistants sat around with stacks of papers from which they arrive at figures. I went from office to office trying to arrange an appointment with "Il Presidente" but the head of Italy's labor unions seemed to be harder to get to than the ruler of the realm. They speak of Il Presidente in hushed tones, for his job of keeping restless workers under control is now one of the most important in the country. When my hopes of seeing him were waning and I was closeted with labor's chief statistician in an effort to get at the bottom of a mass of contradictory figures, I heard a roar outside. The statistician's door burst open and with a loud cry the handsome, heavy-set Il Presidente, resplendent in his black-shirt uniform appeared in the doorway, his right hand raised high in the fascist salute, his left buttoning his pants.

When he saw a stranger he grew red and muttered an apology.

"That's all right," I laughed. "In America labor leaders are sometimes caught with their pants unbuttoned!"

It was easy to arrange an interview after that.

TULLIO CIANETTI, in whose delicate hands with their nicely-manicured fingernails rests the welfare of Italy's industrial workers leaned back in his chair in his sumptuous office and threw his shock of black hair back like a ham pianist about to start on a difficult composition.

"In America," I began gently, "our labor leaders come up from the ranks of the workers. I understand that it is not so in Italy—"

He jumped forward with a quick movement and waved his hands excitedly, a mannerism that continued with scarcely a let-up throughout the four-hour interview.

"Did you come from the industrial ranks?"

"I come from a peasant family," he said quickly. "I began to work from almost the first day I could move around. I was just finishing school when the World War broke out and I volunteered. When the war was over I worked as a clerk in the local office of the Minister of Justice. It was then that I became interested in the political movement of the day. About 1921 I began to organize industrial and agricultural workers in my province as part of my fascist activities."

"After that?"

"Well, from 1922 to 1935 I was head of the provincial federation of all unions of farmers and industrialists. I was national secretary of the Glass Workers Union and national secretary of the Miners Union until I became president of the Confederation of Labor."

"Have you ever worked as a miner or a glass worker?"

He shook his head slowly.

"Had you ever worked in a factory—at any time?"

He jumped forward and began a long speech.

"It is not necessary to be a worker to understand a worker," he said intensely. "It is necessary only to have a heart."

"Did the workers elect you president of the Confederation of Labor?"

"I was appointed. But in reality I was elected. You see, here in Italy labor union delegates submit a list of persons to the government for the job and the government appoints from that list."

"Are any of those delegates non-fascist?"

"Oh, no! They must be a member of the Fascist Party before they can hold office in any labor union."

"I had always been under the impression," I said after he had defended the series of wage cuts given the workers, "that one of the chief functions of a labor union is to present a united front of the workers against wage cuts."

"That is right; but under fascism wages are secondary to the welfare of the state. It was necessary to reduce wages because the agreements made during the prosperity period were higher than the manufacturers could afford. The industrialists demanded it because the world financial crisis and the over-valuation of the lira had cut into their ability to sell their products and consequently, reduced their incomes. It was essential that the cost of production for the manufacturers be reduced."

"So fascism's idea of helping the manufacturers is to reduce the wages of the workers?"

"Oh, it was a gradual process," he explained. "And we had prepared the workers for it by discussing it in the unions for months before. We had to carry on an educational propaganda because they objected to it."

"Very inconsiderate," I commented.

"No, no," he rose to their defense. "Workers do not like to have their wages cut."

"Tell me," I said, "did fascism voluntarily raise the workers' wages when the manufacturers were making big profits during the prosperity period?"

"It was not voluntary. The workers demanded it," he said with an air of surprise that I should even ask such a question.

"Have the workers' representatives any idea of what the profits were of the manufacturers at the time of the wage cuts?"

"Profits?" he said sadly. "There were no profits. The manufacturers were going broke and the state had to step in and reduce wages or they could not have continued in business."

"Yes, I know. Most Italian business is in a very bad state but do you happen to have the records of incomes say of the leading six or eight industrial concerns in Italy during the period that wages were cut?"

"No; that is not within our province. That is at the Confederation of Industry, the union of all manufacturers."

"You mean that the representatives of organized labor have no idea of what the manufacturers earn annually—even their published figures? How can you discuss wage-scale agreements without knowing that?"

"Oh, we ask them. They always tell us. They must tell us."

"Did you ask them or examine their books before you agreed to the wage reductions or find out what their profits were after the reductions went into effect?"

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He looked thoughtfully at a bookcase on the other side of the room and shook his head.

"I suppose we did. I do not remember. But the orders to reduce wages came because the manufacturers were going bankrupt."

"Would it surprise you to know that the profits some of these concerns made, after the wage cuts, were about the same or even higher than in the prosperity period? And that other concerns were able to pay normal dividends from the money they saved by cutting the wages of workers?"

"It cannot be," he exclaimed excitedly.

"Did you ever try to find out?"

"No. You do not understand. Such matters belong to the Confederation of Industry."

"I see that they do. Suppose I give you an idea of the profits of some of the leading manufacturers in the prosperity period and after the wage cuts. Here is the official record from the Confederation of Industry. These, mind you, are the sums they say they earned. They do not include enormous sums to build new plants or for expansion in foreign countries like the Pirelli works, or hidden assets or anything else by which industry hides its profits. It is just a record of their published earnings.

"In 1929 the Fiat works made a profit of over 62 million lire and paid 25 lire per share in dividends. In 1930, when wages were cut because they were going broke, the profit was 41 million lire and the dividends dropped to 18 lire. In 1932 and 1933 they show no earnings, but managed to pay 10 lire a share dividends, apparently from a reserve fund—which isn't bad for a firm crying for help. In 1934, when another wage cut was decreed, it earned more than 24 million lire and paid a dividend of 10 lire."

Il Presidente stared at the sheet of paper from which I was reading. He had forgotten to jump back and forth in his chair.

"Your cotton textile industry was badly hit, yet Cotonificio Cantoni, where so many women normally got a wage far below the living standard, had their wages cut drastically, made 8½ million lire profits and paid a dividend of 125 lire per share in 1930 at the time of the wage cuts. In 1932 and 1933, at the height of the world depression, it made profits ranging between 6 and 7 million lire and paid 100 lire in dividends. I do not have the figures for 1934 when another wage cut was instituted.

"The Cotonificio de Angeli Frua, another of the terribly hit cotton-textile industries made 18 million lire in 1929 and 15 million lire in 1930 when wages were cut.

"Snia Viscosa, of the rayon industry, made 23½ million lire profit in 1931 and paid a dividend of 12 lire. In 1934 when wages were again cut its earnings increased to over 26 million lire and its dividends to 16 lire per share.

"Montecatini, handling fertilizer, earned 64 million lire in 1931 and when wages were cut in 1934 because they were going broke, their earnings increased to 67 million lire.

"Societa' Edison, electric power, earned 114 million lire at the height of prosperity in 1929 and when wages were cut in 1930, the earnings increased to 137 million lire. Dividends remained the same—50 lire per share. In 1934 when wages were again cut the profits rose higher than even in 1930—to almost 138 million lire, or 24 million lire more than it earned at the height of prosperity.

"I have a great many more figures but the Confederation of Labor can get them as easily as I. What I am interested in is whether you think these figures show that the fascist regime is interested in establishing a higher standard of living for the people or whether it functions chiefly to make profits for business at the expense of the people?"

GIANETTI had not uttered a word while I was reading the figures.

"Industry must make a profit or it will take capital out of the country," he said finally. "It is important to the state that business makes a profit."

"Have you any idea of what the average wage scale is for the unskilled and the skilled worker?"

He thought for a moment. "I should say about two lire an hour for the unskilled and about three lire for the skilled."

"And the living cost for an average family per week?"

"Italian families run into large numbers but we estimate that an average family consists of four persons and the living cost for that number is 172 lire per week."

"Assuming then that an unskilled worker puts in a full forty-hour week which he rarely does and a skilled worker the same, the unskilled worker would have a maximum of eighty lire a week and the skilled one 120 while the living cost for their families is 172 lire a week. How can they live?"

He shrugged his shoulders and motioned helplessly with his hand.

"That is the problem. But you must also understand that in Italy there is an average of two and one-half persons who work for each working family of four. The family where only the head works is rare. In Italy everybody works who can find a job. And when two and one-half persons work they can make ends meet."

"In other words, if they want to live everybody in a family who is capable of working must work."

"That is right."

"And if they cannot find work, like the unemployed today?"

"What happens in America or England or France when they cannot find work? They get help from the state and they go hungry."

"But the state here allows them relief of 3 lire and 80 centimes a day for a three-month period only if they have been working and paying into the unemployment relief insurance fund. How can they live on that?"

"They can't," he smiled. "That is why we must have Ethiopia."

"You mean that labor became so restless under starvation wages and unemployment that it threatened the stability of the regime?"

"Labor's restlessness has forced us to seek more land," he admitted. "The world has closed its doors to Italian immigration; and even if those doors were open, why should we send our people to foreign lands to increase the wealth and power of those countries? We want that wealth and power for Italy. The Ethiopian expedition has enabled us to send 40,000 workers there to build roads and do other essential work. We plan for them to remain there, to bring their families and settle on the land we conquer."

I looked at him, a little amazed.

"It is simply a return to the old Roman tradition of conquest and colonization," he added.

"You were driven to conquest by the inability to take care of the unemployed. Couldn't you have taken care of them by reducing the profits of your manufacturers, since the aim of the corporative state is that everybody works for the benefit of the state. The state consists of the majority of the people and that majority happen to be workers and not industrialists."

He shook his head vigorously and drummed on his desk with a forefinger.

"We must give capital a certain margin of profit or it will take its money out of Italy—"

"But the state is superior to capital. That is the fascist thesis. Why can't you issue a decree prohibiting the removal of capital like you issue decrees reducing wages?"

"We do; but we believe in private enterprise," he said lamely. "Anyway, the state has already, through taxation, reduced the income of the manufacturers. The pressure of labor is ever to continue to reduce the income and level out their profits. But we cannot now. It would upset matters. It is war time."

"What made you reduce the number of working hours from 48 to 40 in 1934?"

"The growing number of unemployed. The mechanization of plants and the inability to consume, due to unemployment and export difficulties, what we were already producing, resulted in a drop in production and a consequent increase in unemployment—"

"Did the state reduce the working hours or did the employers suggest it under the theory that everybody is working for the best interests of the state?"

He shot a quick look at me and smiled.

"Ever since 1932 the Italian government has put the question of reducing the number of working hours up to the International Labor Conference in Geneva. For two years it was opposed, especially by employers' groups. So we did it ourselves."

"What I'm trying to get at is whether the reduction was instigated by the leaders acting for the welfare of the workers or was it forced on the state by the growing unrest which compelled the state to placate the workers?"

"I was a delegate, for instance, to the Geneva conference and seeing that it had failed to reduce the number of working hours, I saw the necessity to raise this question—" he began again evasively.

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"I know. What I want to know is whether what you did was based upon your desire to reduce the number of unemployed or whether you were forced to do it by the restlessness of the workers?"

"Leaders can do nothing else but interpret the desires of the masses," he said with a shrug.

"In other words the corporative state did nothing for the welfare of the millions of workers until the workers themselves forced it?"

"The masses knew that we were considering it—"

"Then the picture we have is that the corporative state officials waited until the unrest became threatening before they did something and not because they were actuated by a desire to help the people?"

"When workers demand something, naturally we give it to them."

"That is what I wanted to know. Now, hundreds of thousands of the unemployed have been taken into the army. The making of war products you estimated a little while ago gave employment to about 300,000 more. The 40-hour week reduced unemployment by about another 100,000 you said. But you still have 700,000 registered unemployed. That is the official figure, not the actual one, which would include the partially unemployed and those living with their families. Would not Italy be able to absorb all of its unemployed if the working hours were to be reduced to, let us say, 30 hours a week?"

"Of course," he agreed readily, "but we cannot do it alone. That problem is tied up with international competition. We cannot cut our own throats by reducing the number of working hours. That would force our manufacturers to raise prices and they could not compete with the rest of the world."

"Would it not help if the child labor minimum-age laws were raised and the work children now do were given to unemployed adults with families?"

"It wouldn't make a great deal of difference," he said casually. "There are not many children employed."

"The number of children working has been increasing steadily in the last five years according to official figures. At present there are 108,000 between the ages of 12 and 15 who are registered as working. That is more than you estimated were put to work by the 40-hour week."

HE seemed to receive the figure I had given him as news and looked questioningly at his chief statistician who nodded in verification. Cianetti did not say anything.

"What is the minimum working age for children here?"

"Fourteen," he said quickly.

"Fifteen," interrupted the statistician.

"That's right. Fifteen," Cianetti recalled, equally quickly.

"Well, which is it?"

They got a little red book (everybody goes to a book to look up the laws the moment you ask a question) and pointed to the requirements. Yes, fifteen. That is the minimum age.

"When was it enacted?"

"In 1934."

"What was it before that?"

"Twelve."

"The policy of the fascist regime has been to arrange things for all the people," I began again. "That is the corporative state idea, isn't it? The fascist regime has been in power fourteen years. During almost half of that period the country has witnessed terrible unemployment, misery and hunger. Why did it wait until last year before it raised the minimum child labor law from 12 to 15?"

"The law was passed in 1923. See, it is here. So. In this book. But all the laws were consolidated last year."

"You mean no children under fifteen worked during the last 13 years?"

"Well—you see—the fascist regime is defending not only the workingman but also the race. It is defending the people's health. That is why the minimum child labor law was passed."

"That's very nice. But did children under fifteen work in the past 13 years before this law was consolidated as you put it?"

"Well, they worked. Yes. As apprentices," he said a little irritably.

"I see."

"But you must understand also that in all the 40-hour week agreements there is a clause stating that when the necessity arises women and children are to be supplanted by men."

"That is not the question. However—you say the minimum age for children is 15. Pirelli, the great Italian industrialist and vice-president of the Confederation of Industry, told me it is 14."

A hubbub arose and Il Presidente pointed vigorously to the little red book.

"No. It is 15. It cannot be 14. It says so in this book."

"Pirelli also had a little book. I saw it. It said 14."

A red flush suffused his face.

"Pirelli doesn't know!" he exclaimed angrily.

"Now you say the children are allowed to work because they must learn a trade as apprentices. Pirelli, however, said very frankly that industry employs children because they are cheaper, because they get less even than women."

"Pirelli had no business saying that! Pirelli talks—talks—talks—" He waved his hands furiously. His statistician, a much calmer man, said something to him in a low voice and he quieted down immediately. It was apparently not seemly for Il Presidente to lose his temper before a foreign journalist.

"Pirelli talks too much," he repeated with a quick smile. "Evidently the fascist regime has not yet destroyed all desire for gain."

"Pirelli also said," I continued gently, "that the regime thought it was better for the children to go to work at 14 rather than get too much of an education. If they did not go to work they would have to go to school and if they went to school and got too educated Italy would develop a white-collar class with nothing to do—a class which, having a little education and being able to think, might become a danger to the state if it could not find work."

For a moment I thought Cianetti would explode. The veins stood out on his forehead. A tense silence followed in which no one spoke. He did not look at me.

"That," he said finally, trying to restrain the fury in his voice, "is what Pirelli said?"

"That is what he said to me yesterday in his office," I assured him.

"Well." A grim smile spread over his face. "That only goes to show that we have free speech here."

I had a feeling that Signior Pirelli would hear about this.

"TELL me," I continued, changing the subject, "under the corporative state the idea is to help everybody"—he shot me a quick look as though he were just about fed up with my harping on the corporative state idea—"why then, after 14 years is the middle class slowly disintegrating and the strata are now rapidly showing a distinct dividing line of the very rich and the very poor, with the latter just seeming to work for the very rich?"

"Big wealth as you understand it in America does not exist," he began. "Very many of our rich have completely crumpled up since the world war. Why," he motioned grandly with a hand "right here in my office I employ the landowner upon whose land my family worked for generations."

"So? But I still don't understand the wide divergence—much wider than before fascism came into power."

"Our aim is not to take away wealth but to increase wealth for everybody," he floundered. "Fascism's war is not against the rich but against poverty."

"And how do you expect to accomplish that?"

"I don't know," he said helplessly. "We are trying, always trying."

"And in the meantime the very rich are being protected and the poor are having their wages reduced?"

"We have not yet completed our adjustment," he said with a vague motion of his hands.

"Do you think that fascism has solved the essential differences in the interests between the two classes—the working class and the employing class?"

"Fascism has created a political and legal machine which is working toward the reduction of those differences," he said slowly and then added thoughtfully, "but it will be a difficult thing to abolish the essential differences anywhere."

"You mean that even under fascism there are bound to be two conflicting interests, the interests of the worker and the interests of the employer and that they must always struggle?"

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"Under fascism we will reduce that struggle to the least possible minimum."

"By prohibiting strikes?"

"And lockouts!" he exclaimed.

"What I'm trying to get at is whether you as head of all industrial labor unions in Italy and one of the leaders in the Fascist Party think that the desires and aims of capital and labor must be permanently different and consequently opposed?"

"If I thought that," he said with a harrassed air, "I would think this machinery which fascism has set up is useless. I think the differences between capital and labor can be arbitrated. Fascism has not abolished the class struggle or class distinctions. Only irresponsible people claim that for fascism."

"Thank you. That is what I wanted to get clearly from you," I said rising.

He jumped up with an air of relief.

"Are there any other questions?" he asked politely.

"No, thanks. I think you've made things clear."

"I have talked very much," he said bowing.

"You sure did," I assured him.

John L. Spivak's article in next week's issue is about Nazi Germany. It is called "The Underground Speaks."

The People Demand

MERIDEL LE SUEUR

MINNEAPOLIS.

THE great movement for a United Front of all denominations was launched and a demonstration of what can be done by a Farmer-Labor Party controlled by the militant rank and file to push reforms and relieve the growing suffering of the masses was made recently in the Twin Cities by the Minnesota Conference for Progressive Social Legislation, in which more than 450 delegates took active part. They represented all parts of the state and all shades of political, liberal and radical thought. Miners from the iron range, cooperatives, Farmer-Labor clubs, veterans, trade unions, Communists, were represented. Delegates attended a two-day session which could only remind one of the early days in the Soviet Union when peasants, workers, farmers came by foot or horseback to take part in the new legislation for their needs or of the early American town meetings, before special privilege took over America.

In Minnesota, despite the Farmer-Labor governorship of the state, unemployment is growing, taxation is increasing. We escaped the sales tax only by the skin of our teeth. The state is only twelve percent electrified, one of the lowest percentages in the union. The legislature remains conservative. Reforms attempted by the Farmer-Labor Party concerning relief, taxation, unemployment insurance and steps toward the Cooperative Commonwealth set forth in the platform, have been systematically blocked by the conservatives in both houses and by organizations of feudal employers and capitalists like the Citizens Alliance. The Farmer-Labor bureaucracy has further added to this confusion by playing politics and going above the heads of the rank and file. The recent physical demonstration of this confusion, the shooting of workers by the Minneapolis Farmer-Labor mayor in the Iron and Ornamental Workers strike in August aroused the rank and file to concerted and militant and united action. The recent conference on Social Legislation prior to the meeting of the state legislature in special session was a growth from these confusions. The conference to discuss the coming legislative session was called a few days previous by the Farmer-Labor Party heads to which the rank and file was not invited. The two-day conference was their answer to the bureaucracy of their own leadership in one of the most impressive United Fronts that has taken place in the Midwest.

Over 290 organizations were represented. The list of these is indicative and important when it is remembered that only a few months previous to this conference many of them had been at each other's throats, fighting counter-crosswise against their common enemy.

The character and number of organizations represented included: Farmer-Labor clubs, trade unions, cooperatives, farm holiday locals, Unemployment Councils, United Farmers Leagues, Socialist locals, American League Against War and Fascism, American Farm Bureau, Finnish Federations, Women's League Against High Cost of Living, Workers' Education Society, Interprofessional Association for Social Insurance, International Labor Defense, International Workers Order.

In the face of this concerted demand, the legislature the following week adopted resolutions confining the sessions to social security, relief and the tax laws.

OUTSIDE the state capitol building on a cold Minnesota Saturday morning there were cars from all over the state. By nine o'clock farmers and workers, dressed in what is becoming a midwestern costume, overalls, blazers and hunting caps, were talking together in groups or holding down seats in what was soon to be a crowded auditorium. They didn't leave their wives home either with the babies or to milk the cows. The women were there. They were not interested in abstract or merely political issues. They had gathered to discuss living issues, immediate aims, immediate needs. You hear over and over again "health," "decency," "food," "education."

College professors from the university, white-collar workers, teachers, social workers, skilled and unskilled workers fill the hall. One heard earnest conversations, "When the legislature meets we will have our own recommendations this time. We've come for miles, this is our conference. We've stayed at home long enough." Some old Non-Partisan Leaguers remembered the old legislative slogan, "Go home and slop the pigs." Well, they are through with that now. A United Front on minimum demands. "Together we have power."

John Bosch, leader of the Minnesota Farm Holiday, is chairman. He keeps the tempo slow, deliberate, he isn't railroading anything through or ruling against anyone. The people have to speak, some fiery and swift, some slow, deliberate, with struggle and hunger behind them. "We got to hear the details." A farmer rises to say when the Old-Age Pension Bill is being read too fast, "We got to hear what it is. We have to protect the rank and file. We come here from the country, from the village. You all in the city may have studied out all this pension business, just what's right to do, but we haven't had the time until now. We got to know about it, hear about it, all the details. We got to go back and tell our people. We got to be correct. We must understand it."

Over the Old-Age Pension Bill an argument waxes hot. Curious deep alignments and adjustments are made between different kinds of workers. There is a set-to between the skilled worker and the unskilled. A delegate from the typographical union and another from the Railroad Brotherhoods think that a man owning a house should also get a pension and the bill says he cannot get one if he has property. They think this would not be rewarding thrift if a man and his wife had worked and saved for that house. Another worker says, "The trouble with the high crafts is they are selfish. They got to find out they'll be levelled flat as a pancake right along with the unskilled worker. They got to fight together, not against each other like wild cats." "We have to have some property limitation," a young Finn from the cooperatives says, "or J. P. Morgan is going to apply for a pension sure as the devil." There is deep, astonished laughter.

From this slow, thorough discussion comes

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the United Front, the clear struggle of all factions for immediate needs and aims. The distinction here is very well known, between reform and ultimate ends.

Marian Le Sueur who made the key-note speech at the opening of the Conference stressed this necessity of united struggle against fascist curtailment of basic liberties, against starvation and the necessity for mass pressure "Take back from corporate surplus that we ourselves have produced. We are not afraid of the dole destroying our manhood. Last year we had the best legislature that money could buy. It is going to be different. Take back the power into our own hands. It's time the people spoke. Go ahead with this conference. The people must work it out together. When you get back home call meetings, gather your people together. Come down here, bombard the legislature, the Farmer-Labor leaders, make it a real Farmer-Labor Party. The power is *here*. Don't you feel it here this morning? The people are rising. There is power in our United Front. Power to be reckoned with. *And they had better reckon with it.*"

WHAT a real program of a Farmer-Labor Party could do in the present crisis to lighten the burdens of the people is eloquently apparent in the full program that was worked out in that two-day session, pounded out through argument, through slow weighing:

Taxation

Increase present 5 percent income tax to maximum of 10 percent.

Increase moneys and credits tax from 3 to 10 mills.

Raise gross-earnings tax from 4 to 8 percent.

Increase gift and inheritance tax by one-third.

Abolish tax-exemption bonus.

Require annual filing of names of all corporation stockholders.

Enact a mortgage tax at the same rate as moneys and credits.

Farm Legislation

Cutting interest maximum from 8 to 6 percent and making legal rate 4 instead of 6 percent.

Tax exemption for all homesteads up to $4,000 value.

Extension of rural electrification through municipal cooperatives and lay the basis for absolute control by the people of their own power. Collection of delinquent taxes from corporations through receivership actions.

Relief

Payment of all direct relief in cash.

Production corporations in Minnesota with authority to take over and operate idle factories, to provide jobs and commodities for unemployed under an appropriation of $1,000,000.

Organization of unemployed and relief workers.

Demand the legislature memorialize Congress to continue federal relief appropriations.

Trade Unions

Asked amendments to the state compensation laws to provide for adequate and compulsory compensation and expansion of regulations to define undulant fever as an industrial and compensable disease.

Indorsed the 30-hour week with no reduction in weekly earnings.

Indorsed collective bargaining.

Demanded company unions be outlawed.

Demanded use of injunctions in labor disputes be prohibited.

Indorsed principles of initiative, referendum and recall.

Old-Age Pensions

Favored adoption of bill to take advantage of federal security legislation allowing $15 a month.

Favored $50 a month maximum for persons over sixty and $75 for married persons, based on need, with present income, if any, deducted from pension allowance.

Would make system mandatory under state board of control.

Unemployment Insurance

Demanded Congress be memorialized to provide and administer all unemployment insurance, with financing to come from taxes on gifts, inheritance and incomes in the higher brackets.

Base insurance allotments on decent standard of living.

Indorsed the Lundeen Bill.

Youth

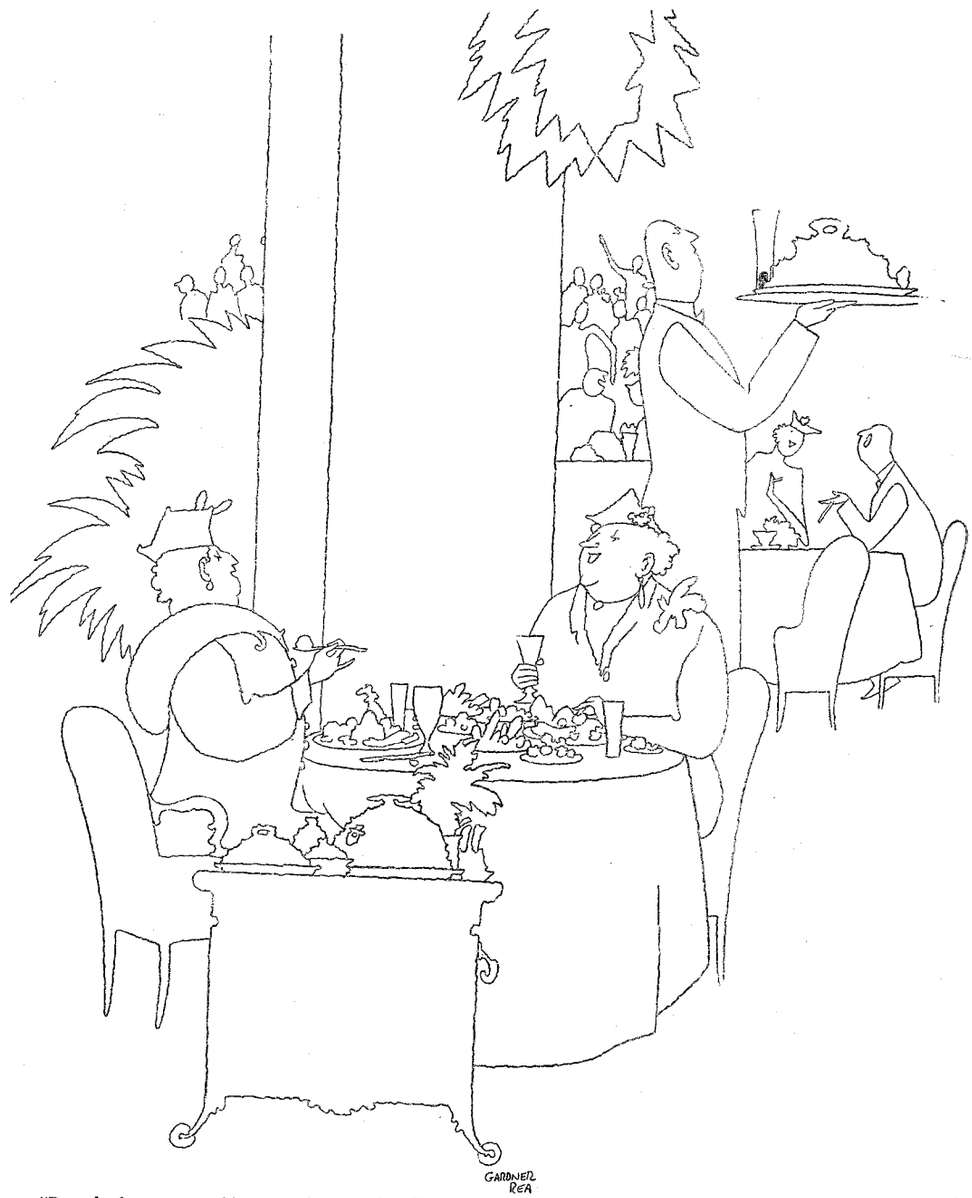
Establishment of a Minnesota Youth Commission and Youth centers to provide employment.

Demanded full educational opportunities, with vocational training and high school and post graduate courses.

Demanded jobs be provided on public works for all youths between ages of 18 and 25.

In addition to the divisional recommendations and demands other resolutions were adopted: endorsement of the formation of "an all inclusive national Farmer-Labor Party for workers, farmers and small business men." Continuing the sponsoring committee to include all delegates at the conference, with authority to call a mass demonstration before the legislature during the next month, if such a move be necessary.

Backed by this statewide voice of the rank and file, Governor Olson the following week challenged Minnesota's reactionary controlled legislature to enact a program that would provide security for the needy and the jobless and pay for it without adding to the tax burden of the common man and woman; to pass pension laws, to assist the victims of industrial layoffs without taking these benefits from their paychecks, to save the school system by raising $2,500,000 more in income taxes on the larger incomes.



"But don't you see, if we had a fascist dictator we'd all go on war-time rations—and then we'd soon be nice and thin."

Gardner Rea

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One of Us

LEANE ZUGSMITH

THE two men, leaning against the billboard in the vacant corner lot, had not spoken for the past fifteen minutes. Victor Hoge was gouging splinters out of a wooden stick with seamed and cracked hands that had not become accustomed to idleness. Jean Boileau, younger, had learned in the last few months, in his cell, in the courtroom and now in his liberty pending appeal, how to remain immobile. Yet it was he who spoke first.

"Marie coming," he said.

Hoge looked up from his stick and saw her dragging the boy's express wagon with the two-year-old sitting in it, propped up between a sack of potatoes and an empty fruit crate. A muscle in his cheek began to twitch. He looked at Boileau and, as though satisfied to find his face gone sullen, turned back to the splinters.

Marie Larkin halted the wagon before the men, casting a quick look at the child before she made her laconic greeting. She resembled Boileau, her first cousin, but looked older, spent and harassed beyond her thirty-one years.

"Well?" Both men spoke at once.

She made a transparent effort to infuse confidence into her voice. "I got a letter from him yesterday. Yeah, why, I was wanting to bump into one of you to tell you and all. He'll be back tomorrow, taking a bus in from Grand Rapids." She paused only to hurry on as though she knew she had wasted her time waiting for a reply "Yeah, why, tomorrow night, he wrote, on the bus."

Her cousin parted his sullen lips. "A bus? That's Jim-dandy. Course, it ain't no limousine like what he's used to now."

"Shut your mouth, you!" she cried out. "Who ain't rode in a bus? What's there in a bus to—"

Hoge interrupted her. "What else he write? Got the letter?"

"I left it to home. Nothing much in it."

"No photo from the rotygravoor?" Boileau asked. "Oh, I was just up to Missis Rockerbilt's for a Jim-dandy snack of champagne wine and Porterhouse steaks! No word of that?"

"You can see his letter. I never hid none of them from you, did I? Come on up later in the day," she said without welcome in her tones. "I got to go down to the Relief with him." She took another quick look at the two-year-old.

"You won't get nothing from *them*," said Hoge. "Charlotte's been and tried every day this week."

"He's ailing," she said grimly.

They looked at the child who began to wail as though something had frightened him. Marie picked up the tongue of the express wagon and, without making farewells, moved down the street.

After a few moments, Boileau said: "Maybe Emmet's bringing home medicines from New York and other points east." As Hoge said nothing and did not remove his gaze from the stick in his hand, the French-Canadian added bitterly: "Sure, and a high-class doctor from one of them big hospitals they got there."

He pulled the visor of his cap farther down over his face and stiffened against the billboard.

THEY called for Floyd Sommers and now, in the parched mid-afternoon, the three men walked abreast toward the Larkin home that was one of a row of joined frame houses flush with the railroad tracks and alike even in their scabbed-off paint and their plots of earth on which no grass grew. Although the three men, together with Emmet Larkin, had been finishers in the Dooner Reed and Fibre Furniture factory, although they had been equally interested members of the same union, although they had all been arrested and convicted for the crime of dynamiting a disused wing of the Dooner plant and although each one was innocent, they did not speak to one another as they marched down the unshaded street. Now, there was no work for their experienced hands in all of Michigan, there was no union members who dared to be seen with them, there was, in fact, no longer a union for them. They could only recount the events that had happened in the last few months or repeat their hopes for a reversal of the verdict if enough money for an appeal was raised by Emmet Larkin and their lawyer; and they were silent going down the street. But, if there was little to be said to one another, there was something to be said to Marie Larkin. The men's faces became hard and resentful as they bunched together on the two steps leading up to her door.

The oldest girl, at thirteen as lovely as Marie had been but a few years before, slipped wordless out of the room when they entered. Marie's face was hostile as she took the letter from its envelope.

"Here," she said shortly, holding out the sheet to her cousin.

"Read it aloud," said Hoge.

Boileau cleared his throat. "'Dear Wife, I looked to get a letter from—'"

"You can skip that," said Marie.

He ran his eye down the page. "O. K. Here: 'After going to that house in Philadelphia I guess I wrote you about where the lady charged for cocktails to raise cash, it turns out she raised near onto sixty dollars, a lot of which was ate up by our railroad fare. In Chicago, some kind of club, it's more than I can do to keep track of all them names, is having me talk and charging admission. Bannister says it won't be no use to try to hit Detroit again and he ought to know. If a lawyer don't, who does? I guess I mentioned before about I and Bannister getting wrote up in that New York newspaper. Enclosed find clipping with picture that was printed along beside it. Taking the bus from Grand Rapids Friday afternoon. I don't know why you haven't wrote—'"

Marie interrupted again. "That's all you're concerned about."

With curled, disdainful lip, Boileau looked at Hoge and next at Sommers.

"Let's see the stuff that was wrote up," said Hoge.

She took the clipping from the envelope and watched the men's faces.

Boileau was the last to look at it. When he had finished reading, he crumpled up the clipping and threw it on the floor. "The *Larkin* case!" he cried out savagely. "The *Larkin* frameup! Funds being raised for *Larkin!* What the hell about *us?*"

"What should Emmet be worrying about us for with all them swells making a lapdog out of him?" Hoge shouted.

Sommers' voice was quiet. "By way of meaning no harm, Marie," he said, "you don't think your man's coming back to us, do you?"

"You heard what he wrote."

"I wasn't meaning that, I was meaning—his head's been turned, with all that stuff, with all that highbrow—"

"Aw, forget your 'meaning no harm!'" Boileau cried out. "You talk as soft as he will. He's changed. We know it. We was alike stewing in the same hell-pot till he went off where the ladies in evening gowns are cooing over him."

"Shut your mouth, you!" said Marie. "He went off to raise cash for the four of you, hisself included. You was there, every one of you. I didn't hear no complaints then. Yeah, why, you told me yourselves your own lawyer said one man was to go. You told me yourselves that it was all so free and equal you had to flip a coin to see who'd go. Deny me that!"

"Bannister said it'd make our case dramatic. It was Bannister's idea that people all over the country would help us, if one went out to talk to them," said Hoge defensively.

And although the other two men had heard and said this many times before, both called out "yes, yes" and nodded their heads.

"Emmet didn't ask to go," she answered.

"No, and I hear it just broke his heart to get that new suit." Boileau jerked at the

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torn pocket of his own jacket— "and then new ties and shirts. Sure."

"By way of meaning no harm, Marie," said Sommers, "Bannister always felt the closest to your man. Now, that isn't natural. A lawyer's not one of us."

"It gives you to think," said Hoge and the muscle in his cheek twitched rapidly.

Marie jumped to her feet. "Maybe you think Emmet put the dynamite there, after all." Her voice broke.

"No," said Hoge, "we know who put the dynamite there and we know who told him to."

"The name is Dooner," said Boileau between his teeth.

"A wing they shut off four years ago," said Sommers. "And nothing worse than windows smashed, anyway."

And although they had all said this in their cells and in the courtroom and in their homes and everywhere for so many months, the thought could not fail to paralyze them. The three men and Marie remained silent, their bitter stares fixed ahead of them.

Presently Hoge took a deep breath and rose. "Guess I'll be scooting," he said.

Sommers got up. "We'll see you tomorrow, Marie, after he gets in."

"Sure," said Boileau. "After he gets the key to the city and the photographers gotten done snapping his mug."

Marie closed her lips over her retort, bending down to retrieve the crumpled newspaper clipping.

Boileau stood regarding her, as the other men made for the door. "Do you think he'll have any use for you after them ladies in the east?" His voice was heavy with pain.

Marie looked at him. For the brief measure of time that their stares locked, they were cousins, guardians, each of the other, against the alien not of their own blood. Then she spoke.

"I'll take care of my own affairs and I'll thank you to let them alone."

She turned her back until the men could be heard on the sidewalk. Then she ran to the door and locked it and, with her face hard and resentful as had been the face of any of the men, she began to thud her head against the boards.

SHE had been at the bus stop, waiting alone for over half an hour, apparently indifferent to the curious glances or even the words thrown to her by some of the persons gathered there. When Emmet swung off the bus, the only familiar thing about him was the cheap paper grip that belonged to her. The new suit that she had seen but once, the hat, the tie transformed him; and she walked toward him with lagging step, as though to a stranger.

She let him put his arms around her and turned her cheek to his kiss before she said: "Better hurry off. They're waiting for you at home."

"Let's go." He grasped more firmly the handle of the grip.

"And them all spying anyway." She jerked her head toward the onlookers.

When they were out of earshot of any one, she drew in her breath and then, in an expressionless voice, said: "You look all right."

"I'm glad to be back."

"Tuck's ailing."

"You didn't write me. What's wrong?"

"He'll be all right."

They walked along in silence. A few doors before their own house, she halted him with her hand on his sleeve. "Listen," she said, drawing him to the curb, "they're down on you, Jean and Victor the most, but all three of them."

"Down on me?" he said, dumbfounded. "Do they think it's my fault—?"

"They think you're changed. Yeah, why, you ain't one of us and all."

"Changed!" Now he laughed. "Why, I ain't changed. They're nuts."

"Are they?" she said levelly and walked ahead of him and into the house.

His laughter had become a smile that softened the expression of his face as he shook hands with the three men. Marie sat in the corner, where it was dim, and watched the smile fade from his face as he slowly, almost reluctantly became aware of the antagonistic eyes turned on him.

"Well, what's the news?" he said uncomfortably, starting to sit down on the window sill and then, unaccountably, straightening up.

Boileau's smile was sour. "I guess you're the first speaker. Give us one of them talks you been making all around the map."

Emmet's laugh was brief and full of bewilderment. "What's eating you?" he asked.

"What have we been eating is a better question," said Hoge, "while you been dining de luxey all around."

The corners of Emmet's mouth curved down; his lids dropped over his eyes; he made no reply.

"Ain't we a good enough audience for you, Mr. Larkin of the *Larkin* case?" asked Boileau. "We're only the other defendants, if you've forgot."

Now he looked up. "For Christ's sake, how can I forget?" he said.

Sommers threw out his hand. "Meaning no harm, Emmet," he began but Boileau cut him off.

"Sure, we mean harm. We ain't got no love for you in our hearts. We been staying to home and *taking it* while you been off on a pleasure trip like none of us never knowed."

"Nor him, neither!" cried out Hoge. "Not that we grudge it to him. Only we don't trust you, see, no more. We don't think you give a hoot in hell for no one but Larkin no more! See!"

Emmet wet his lips, turning his puzzled beseeching eyes from one man to the next, searching for his wife and finding it impossible to decipher her expression in the dark corner where she sat. Then he said slowly, painfully and as though each word was being wrung from him:

"But all four of us will spend eight years in jail."

No one moved.

He spoke again. "They got so many calls on their purses, the few of them what care. There ain't enough money to go around for all the frame-ups and all the other men that already been railroaded into—"

Marie intercepted him, overturning her chair as she flew from her dark corner. "There ain't going to be no appeal?" she cried out in anguish.

He shook his head, "No."

"Emmet! Emmet!" she called out on a note of intolerable pain.

Boileau got up to stand within a foot of Emmet, his head down. Hoge moved even closer to Emmet's side, his hands in his pocket, his eyes also averted. Sommers walked as though he were blind, arriving finally at Emmet's far side. From where Marie now stood, with convulsed face, the men appeared to have merged into one compact mass.

Presently Boileau, without looking up from the floor, said: "Eight years."

In silence the men drew even closer to one another. Then, one of them, Emmet Larkin, said gravely and without hope: "Yes."

WHAT DO YOU SEE

When you look at a machine
what do you see
steel plates, bolts, gears, pistons, cylinders
revolving, gyrating, steaming, assembling
do you hear it
hissing, throbbing, crashing, beating
is it a frenzied monster
cursing, screaming, tearing, crushing

This is what I see

hands, arms, fingers, legs, thighs
moving, pumping, feeding, guiding
I see nerves, sinews, muscles, torsos
straining, breaking
I see sweat mixing with oil
and over it and in it and thru it
marrow and streaming blood

Shall we break the machine, grind it to dust, scatter the plans, rescue the dreams drowning in sweat, silence the giant's roar, go back . . .

Tomorrow laughs at my question and asks

if you had a billion extra hands
WOULD YOU CUT THEM OFF

Tomorrow says this is what I see

machines dancing and dreaming and humming
humming a worker's tune
and over them and in them and thru them
laughter and the power of man
laughter and the power of man

FRANK RUDNICK.

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Along Came Stakhanov

JOSHUA KUNITZ

Moscow.

THE clearest and most dramatic manifestation of the Soviet Union's transition into a new phase of economic and cultural development can be found in the Stakhanov movement. A biographical sketch of the young man under whose name that movement has made its explosive entry into contemporary Soviet history is significant, not so much because of Stakhanov's special and peculiar virtues, but because he symbolizes a whole generation of new Soviet people: millions of young men and women, many of them of peasant origin, brought up and trained during the hectic period of war, revolution, reconstruction and two successive Five Year Plans.

Alexei Stakhanov was born into a landless peasant family twenty-nine years ago, in a small village in the Orel Province. His father, like his grandfather and like most of the poor peasants in the village, had one overwhelming desire—to buy a horse and enough land to feed his family. The desire proved unattainable under the Czar and the grandfather, like his fathers before him, reluctantly went to work in the mines. Yet the dream of a horse and land haunted the Stakhanovs for decades — it became a family obsession. Among Alexei's earliest memories are interminable conversations about how good and ample life would be if there were only a horse and a tiny plot of land. On his deathbed, Alexei's grandfather kept urging his son to work hard, to work night and day, but to scrape together enough rubles for a horse and a small plot of land. "The mine is a curse; get out of the mine," said the old man. Alexei's father heeded the advice. He worked hard; he worked day and night; but he could never get together enough money for a horse. He died mumbling about a gray mare and a green field near a quiet brook.

Alexei was twelve when his father died shortly after the October Revolution. His inheritance consisted of a dilapidated hut, three young children to care for and a dream. Being now the head of the family, Alexei took a job with the neighboring miller, a kulak. He carried heavy sacks of grain and flour, did domestic chores and tended the miller's horses. The miller promised to sell him a fine colt cheaply if he worked well and faithfully. Alexei was overjoyed. He worked harder than ever, and the boss cheerfully subtracted monthly installments from Alexei's pay. But when the end of the year came he drove the boy out of the house and kept his money. That was Alexei's first lesson in the class struggle. He began to hate with the passionate hatred of a cheated lover—first the miller, then all bosses, employers, kulaks. Throughout the N.E.P. period Alexei, still a landless and horseless peasant, worked as farm hand for one kulak or another. By 1927, however, the younger children had grown sufficiently to take care of themselves. Alexei felt a bit freer. He put on his *lapti* (best shoes), threw his little wooden trunk over his shoulder and, like hundreds of thousands of other young peasants in similar circumstances, made his way to the mining region of the Don Basin. His plan was to work a year or two, save some money, buy a horse and return to the village to establish his own independent household.

At first Alexei dreaded the mine. "The mine is a curse; get out of the mine," he remembered his grandfather's last words. He feared that the mine would sap all the strength out of him. Gradually he grew used to it and became more and more a part of life in the mine. His initial job was that of driver. His love for horses and the excellent care he took of them attracted the attention of his superiors. He was appointed head driver, in charge of seventy horses. Life became a little easier. The thought of an early return to the village temporarily abandoned, Alexei decided to bring his family from the village.

But just as things began to run rather smoothly for Alexei, there occurred a new and disturbing development in the mines: mechanization was introduced, electric cars, motorized hauling, etc. Soon, it appeared, there would be no more horses for Alexei to take care of. Alexei was unhappy, he fretted and brooded, and finally made up his mind to return to the village. It was his fellow countryman, Diukanov, a more mature and experienced miner and the Party organizer of Alexei's section of the mine, who dissuaded him. And it was due to Diukanov's influence that Alexei transferred to actual mining work.

Now, a new life began for him. Caught in the tide of technical reconstruction that swept the Soviet land, Alexei suddenly realized the narrowness of his former life, the utter puniness of his impassioned and always frustrated yearning for a horse. Was that something to dedicate one's life to, when everything around was seething with effort, glowing with achievement? Paradoxically enough, it was while working underground in the feebly-illuminated mine that Alexei caught a glimpse of broader horizons, a vaster world which spread before him to be explored and mastered. By observing others, Alexei soon learned how to handle a pneumatic drill. But that did not satisfy him. He wanted to understand the driving mechanism, the power that moved it, how that power came into being, where and by what mysterious way it flowed into the hammer. Everybody around him was studying, was taking courses to "raise his qualifications," was reading newspapers, was engaged in some social activity, in the club, the union, the dramatic circle. Alexei began to feel the terrible weight of his ignorance. He began to frequent the club, to sit through meetings. He went to school to "liquidate his illiteracy." Soon he too was reading newspapers and books.

His wife still lived in the past. She was homesick for the village. She argued: "Now Alioshinka, you have saved up enough for a horse; let's go back home." But Alexei wouldn't hear of it. "My home is right here," he declared.

When he felt prepared to take courses to raise his qualifications, Alexei registered for a six-months' course on the automatic hammer. By the end of the six months he was quite an expert. He began to overtake others and surpass not a few of the older miners. He was earning more money now. That was pleasant, of course, but it was not of primary importance. The main thing—he enjoyed his work, the sense of growing mastery, the companionship of Diukanov and Petrov. His enthusiasm was finally communicated to his wife. She also began to study, read papers, go to meetings, display a more intelligent interest in the education of her children and follow more closely events in the mine where her husband worked. Her nostalgia for the village vanished. Now she wouldn't think of leaving Gorlovka.

One must remember this: Alexei Stakhanov had come to the mine in 1927. He had worked there all through the immensely difficult period of the first Five-Year Plan. The din of socialist competition, workers' counterplans, shock-brigading, was all around him: competition between whole factories, plants and shops in the most diverse parts of the vast land; competition between workers and peasants, competition between collective and state farms, socialist challenges; slogans, speeches, placards everywhere. One would have to be quite subnormal to remain immune to such powerful social stimuli. It got into one's blood. Alexei Stakhanov was a normal human being, reacting normally to social stimuli, and he too was carried along by this wave of creative social enthusiasm.

At first his responses were quite unconscious. It was through the reading of Lenin's *How to Organize Competition* and *The Great Initiative* that his responses were lifted into the plane of consciousness. For

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the first time he began to apprehend the meaning of socialist competition and shock brigading.

> Socialism—he read—not only does not extinguish competition but on the contrary creates for the first time the possibility of applying it on a really *wide,* on a really *mass* scale, of really drawing the vast majority of toilers into work in which they can develop their abilities, which can reveal talent among the people that has never been tapped and that capitalism trampled on, crushed and strangled in thousands of millions. Now that a socialist government is in power it is our task to organize competition. . . . Only now has the possibility for the wide and really mass display of enterprise, competition and bold initiative been created. Every factory from which the capitalist has been ejected, or at least put under restraint, under real workers' control, every village from which the landlord-exploiter has been smoked out and in which his land was taken away is now, and only now, a domain in which the man of toil can reveal himself, straighten his back, rise to his full stature and feel that he is a human being. Now, for the first time after centuries of working for others, of involuntary labor for exploiters has work for oneself become possible and moreover work based on all the conquests of modern technique and culture. . . . *Many are the peasants and workers* endowed with organizational talent, and these talented people are just beginning to realize that they are such, to wake up, to yearn for live, creative, great work, to undertake the construction of a socialist society of their own.

It was while reading Lenin that Stakhanov came to the understanding that in the Soviet Union good work and study were not merely a matter of advancing oneself or of satisfying only one's personal hunger for knowledge. He began to sense the deeper implications of his own work and studies. The peasant was being transmuted into a conscious member of the working class. He was working not only for himself and his family, but for society as a whole.

Shock work—how enthusiastically Lenin acclaimed it when it first made its appearance in the forms of "subbotniks" during the early months of the Revolution. Alexei was always deeply moved reading about those heroic days when thousands of weary, starved workers, on their own initiative and without any pay, gave their Saturdays, their nights, every minute of their rest time to wrench out of a prostrate economy, by superhuman effort, a little more fuel for the country, an additional freight car or locomotive, some extra metal to strengthen the proletarian front against Kolchak and Denikin. And whenever he heard a worker grumbling about the difficulties of the first Five-Year Plan, about the lack of food and clothes and adequate shelter and whenever he himself felt a little low and doubtful, he would think of the great deeds of valor and self-sacrifice of the workers who initiated the subbotniks, and his faith and eagerness to toil would perk up again. "If in hungry Moscow, in the summer of 1919," he would quote to himself Lenin's words, "hungry workers, who had gone four hard years of imperialist war and then through a year and a half of still harder civil war, could begin this great venture, what will be the further development when we shall have won the civil war and shall conquer the world?"

Alexei Stakhanov *Deni*

Even when he was an illiterate farm-hand, Alexei had felt a great love for Lenin; but now he was beginning really to understand him. And the more he read of him, the more he was impressed with his profound wisdom and prophetic foresight. It was relatively easy to appreciate the significance of socialist competition *now,* when the structural wonders that were being accomplished on the Dnieper, in Stalingrad, in Kharkov, in Baku, in Magnitogorsk, in Kuznetsk, in Cheliabinsk, in Khibinogorsk, in Gorki, presented illustrious proof of its potency. But what amazed Alexei was that Lenin had foreseen all this when the first few Communist workmen initiated the subbotniks. "The Communist subbotniks," he wrote, "have an enormous historical importance precisely because they demonstrate to us the class conscious and voluntary initiative of the workers in increasing the productivity of labor, in passing on to a new labor discipline, in creating socialist conditions of economy and of life."

To Alexei now, the acquisition of skill was not any more an end in itself, his personal triumph. It was a part of a great historic process, the triumph of socialism. Alexei began to feel that in perfecting himself in his work, in freely subjecting himself to an exacting labor discipline, in constantly augmenting the productivity of his labor, he, besides improving his own lot, was continuing the work of the heroic initiators of the subbotniks. Lenin's explanation of how the feudal organization of social labor maintained itself by the discipline of the whip, how the capitalist organization of social labor

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maintained itself by the threat of hunger and how the Communist organization of social labor would maintain itself by the free and conscious discipline of the workers themselves, was stamped upon his mind. He began to see more clearly the reason for the Five-Year Plan. Certainly, to achieve a permanent victory over capitalism in Russia it was not enough to seize power. The most essential and, in the final analysis, most difficult task was to reconstruct the economic organization of the country from top to bottom, to combine the latest achievements in science and capitalist technique with a mass association of class-conscious workers who would be creating large-scale, socialist industry. And Lenin was certainly right when he insisted that that task could never be realized by the heroism of a single outburst of enthusiasm, but that it required "a most protracted, a most stubborn, most strenuous heroism in the day-to-day work."

And then there were Stalin's speeches, so simple, so lucid, so timely in explaining the why and wherefore of everything that was going on in the Soviet land. When Alexei read that the most remarkable feature of socialist competition and the shock-brigade movement was the basic revolution they were making in man's attitude toward labor, transforming labor from a disgraceful and painful burden into "a matter of *honor,* a matter of *glory,* a matter of *valor* and *heroism,*" he felt as if Stalin were speaking of him, the obscure miner Alexei Stakhanov and of millions of others like him. Scraps of Stalin's speeches, phrases, slogans stuck tenaciously in Alexei's mind and gave meaning and structure to the apparently contradictory and confusing things that were going on about him: unconsciously, Alexei began to perceive the dialectic of the historical process. A new sense of pride in his country, in its achievements and in the class that was in the vanguard making the country progressive, cultured, strong, began to stir within him. It was not national chauvinism; it was Soviet patriotism. It was not a desire to oppress any other nationality or to take anything away from anybody; it was a determination to contribute the best in him to the improving, protecting and defending of the magnificent structure that the Soviet peoples — Russians, Uzbeks, Stkjiks, Kalmuks, Germans, Greeks, Ukrainians— were erecting at such enormous sacrifices. "We do not covet one inch of anybody else's land, but we won't give up one inch of our own."

One of the most powerful influences on Alexei's further development was the movement started by the miner Izotov in a neighboring mine. This was a new stage in the unfoldment of socialist competition and shock work. As more and more factories and plants were being constructed, the problem of training a sufficient number of skilled workers to run those plants and to run the machines built in those plants was beginning to press for a speedy solution. Connected with that was the problem of an adequate supply of coal for the growing metallurgical industry. In the Donbas, mining was being mechanized. But the machinery was not being utilized properly for the lack of skilled hands. And it was in response to Stalin's definition of socialist competition as the raising of the general level of proficiency through the comradely aid which the more skilled workers would give the less skilled or unskilled ones, that Izotov, a highly skilled miner, began to train others. Before long, Izotov's method was adopted in other mines and industries throughout the country. Izotov became a national hero. The highest honors at the disposal of the government were showered upon him. And finally he was invited to Moscow to study in the Industrial Academy. Izotovism grew into a powerful movement among the Soviet worker and peasant masses. The slogan was: Work well yourself, but also teach others and raise them to your level of proficiency. Izotov's example served as constant inspiration and incentive in all of Stakhanov's subsequent activities.

More than ever before, it became obvious to Alexei that with the completion of the First Five-Year Plan, the early enthusiasm for new construction, accompanied by enormous waste of machinery and men, would have to be replaced by a new, a higher type of enthusiasm—"the enthusiasm, the pathos of mastering the new factories and techniques; of seriously increasing labor productivity and cutting down costs." He would burn with impatience and shame every time he heard reports of some foreign engineer's caustic comment about the hopeless inefficiency of the Soviet worker. "Just think of it," he would complain to his comrades, "they think we are hopeless. Whenever these experts put up a plant here, they calculate the productive power of the plant on the basis of the lowest standards of work, that is, they kindly allow for our hopeless stupidity!" And the invariable conclusion of his complaint was, "We'll show them yet! Now cadres decide everything, said Comrade Stalin."

Alexei read and re-read Stalin's speech at the Red Army Academy, delivered on May 4, 1935. "The point is," he kept on repeating to himself, "that we have factories, mills, collective farms, state farms, an army; we have the machines for all of them; but we lack people with sufficient experience to squeeze out of those machines all that can be squeezed out of them." Squeezing out of the machines everything that can be squeezed out of them, that is the problem now, that is our job, thought Alexei. "If we have good and numerous cadres in industry, agriculture, transport and the army—our country will be invincible. If we do not have such cadres—we shall be lame on both feet."

In the meanwhile, with the abolition of the bread card, the strengthening of the ruble and the growing tendency in various industries to decline state subsidies, socialist competition was passing from the Izotov phase to a still higher one—the *otlichnik* phase. *Otlichno,* in the Russian, means excellent. An otlichnik therefore is one who does his job excellently, a shock worker engaged in socialist competition and concentrating not only on the quantity of his production, but on its quality as well. That phase could only come when there were enough skilled workers and enough incentives provided by the food and light industries to stimulate the struggle for high quality into a genuine mass movement. Alexei became one of the leading *otlichnika* in the Don Basin.

The mine in which Alexei worked, the Central Irmino, had long been listed among the best mines in the Don Basin, among the first to carry out the annual production plan. In 1934, it had completed the plan twenty-seven days ahead of the schedule. In 1935, however, coal production in the Donbas was lagging. Within the first nine months of the year, the region, the most important coal basin in the country, was two and a half million tons of coal behind the schedule. While everything in the Soviet Union was fulfilling or overfilling the plan, the coal industry was registering failure month after month. Even the Central Irmino Mine disgraced itself in the third quarter of the year by carrying out only 99 percent of the plan. Something had to be done immediately, for the winter was approaching and there was the danger that the lack of coal might interfere with the smooth operation of the heavy industries. The Party Committee, leading members of the union, managers of mines were frantic. They met, discussed and argued, but no solution seemed available.

The people who were especially distressed by the failure of Central Irmino were Petrov, the Party organizer of the mine, the miner Diukanov, a Communist, and Alexei Stakhanov, still a non-Party Bolshevik. They would often get together and ponder the difficulties of the mine and the reason for its failure. One thing was obvious— the trouble was not in the lack of machinery: during the past few years the Donbas had been equipped with an adequate supply of machines and mechanisms. Nor was it the quality of the machines: the pneumatic drills of Soviet make worked very well indeed. Nor was it in the lack of skilled miners: there were plenty of miners who knew how to handle a pneumatic drill. The inescapable conclusion was that the machines were not being fully utilized because of bad organization.

In analyzing how production was organized in his own section, Stakhanov pointed out some very fundamental flaws. First was the shortness of the face worked by each miner. A seam 85 meters long was divided into eight or nine faces on which

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eight or nine miners worked in one shift. The length of the face had a limiting effect on the initiative of the individual miner: having mined his section, the miner, irrespective of his desires, had to stop; he could not go any farther or produce anything extra. A second major flaw was the inefficient division of labor, each miner having the job of both drilling and propping his face. Usually the miners managed to complete the drilling in two and a half to three hours, the rest of their time being consumed in propping. Since the work in the mine was organized in three shifts and since one of them was a repair shift, it turned out that the pneumatic drills were actually utilized only five or six hours a day and were idle the rest of the time even though the compressors furnished air the full two shifts. These flaws, Stakhanov held, were easily remediable. The work had to be rationalized. The shackles of the old work standards had to be smashed. The miner had to be given free play. To ensure the full utilization of the drills, the process of drilling had to be separated from that of propping, since it was obvious that the transfer from one to the other and back again made the miner lose much precious time. Stakhanov proposed, therefore, that there be special drillers and special proppers and that each driller, aided by a brigade of proppers, be allowed to work the whole seam instead of a short terrace.

Then arrived the memorable day.

"International Youth Day was approaching," relates Stakhanov characteristically, "and I wanted to mark that day by a record increase in the productivity of labor. . . . At the end of August, the Party organizer of the mine and the chief of the section came to my home and suggested that I go into the seam. I accepted the proposition very readily and on the eve of August 31 I went down to mine. It is difficult to convey all that I and the comrades who went down with me lived through at that time. But I remember that all of us were certain of the success of our work.

"The proppers began work after me. We worked tensely, but time passed unnoticed. I worked five hours forty-five minutes. We measured and it was found that I had drilled the entire seam and had mined 102 tons.

"When I made my way 'to the mountain' it was already dawn. A group of comrades met me and warmly shook my hand. But I must say that there were no small number of people in our own mine who did not at first believe that I, during a single shift, could mine 102 tons.

" 'They surely have added something to his record,' they said. 'He could not have mined so much coal in one shift.'

"It was necessary to follow up this work, necessary to show all the doubters *that 102 tons and more were possible without much exertion, that it was only necessary to organize labor properly.* And so, on September 3, the Party organizer of the section in which I worked, Comrade Diukanov, went down into the mine. This section is called 'Nikanor Vostok.' Diukanov worked one shift and produced 115 tons. But Diukanov was also not believed at first. It was necessary to send another man down. The third to go down into the shaft to mine was the Young Communist Kontsedalov, who set a new record—125 tons. A few days later I broke my own and their records by mining at first 175 and then 227 tons in one shift.

"Of course my record would remain a record if practical deductions had not been instantly made from it for the whole section and the whole shaft.

"It became clear to all that work in the section could be organized in such a way as to give 110 percent utilization of the pneumatic drill, in such a way as to increase several times the productivity of the pneumatic drill worker."

Thus Alexei Stakhanov, the obscure miner, the former illiterate peasant whose greatest dread had been the mine and whose only dream had been a horse and a little plot of land, suddenly burst into fame by dramatically demonstrating, after years of study and thinking, how a pneumatic drill, manipulated by an efficient and enthusiastic Soviet miner, aided by two efficient and enthusiastic Soviet proppers, could increase production from the "normal" average of seven to fourteen tons of coal in a six-hour shift to what then seemed the fantastic figure of 102 tons in 5 hours, 45 minutes. The Communist Party in the Donbas, the Communistic press, alive to the tremendous implications for the whole of Soviet industry contained in Stakhanov's achievement threw themselves into the task of popularizing Stakhanov and his method with exemplary fervor. Before long Stakhanov's name was on every tongue, his picture in every paper. His method, in its minutest details, was discussed and studied in every shop, mine, factory and collective farm in the land. Workers in other industries began to emulate him, to applying variations and modifications of the Stakhanov method to their own work. The press began to glitter with names of workers whose records were equal to, or even better than, those of Stakhanov. A new, a higher phase, the Stakhanov phase, of socialist competition and shock brigade, came into being. Stakhanovism was born.

P.S.—I understand that the ancient dream of the Stakhanovs has at last been realized: Alexei Stakhanov now has his own horse!

Correspondence

Artists on the Picket Line

To The New Masses:

The arrest of Artists Union members on the picket line in front of May's Department Store, in Brooklyn, December 14, after having been brutally beaten up by the police, may be cited as an example that modern American artists feel the need of unity between workers, intellectuals and otherwise.

The order of the day was as follows: the police, mounted, on foot and in plainclothes, charged the picket line and started to swing their clubs and fists while women screamed. Picketers were back into a blind alley where the cops went to work in earnest. When a man protested because a cop was beating up a girl, he paused for a moment to club the protester in the kidneys and on the jaw. The pickets were forced to run a gauntlet of smashing clubs and fists when being jammed into the patrol wagons.

The pickets who were arrested, have been asked for $500 bail, *each,* and have been charged with the intentionally misapplied "conspiracy" law.

The interim between attacking artists and attacking art itself is not very great. Let's not believe that American fascism is solely confined to the southern states: the ugly facts, the very physical and vicious attack on both workers and intellectuals clearly demonstrates its presence right here in New York City.

Edward M. Freed.

The Menace of De La Roque

To The New Masses:

I am referring to the editorial "De La Roque's Mistake" in the December 17 issue.

It is a very dangerous editorial. It spreads a false illusion of security upon the fact that La Roque is a fool— has a "slow intelligence" and generally stupid. Whether he is a fool or not is of little importance. The significant fact is that those behind him, finance capital, are no fools. They are merely utilizing the Croix de Feu as a murderous agent to drown in blood the aspirations and struggles of the working class. The rotting system of exploitation and war is shaking. Those behind La Roque are determined to uphold the dying system at the expense of the very lives of the French people. Optimism lies in the unity and strength of the proletariat and not in the "foolishness" of La Roque.

Your analysis of Laval's position as a result of the fascist Ybarnegardy's proposal is confusing to say the least. The Front Populaire was caught by surprise and Laval saved his political neck. The Front Populaire, for various reasons, was not ready to oust Laval and he therefore was able for the time being to avoid being "forced to resign power on an issue like that"—as you state in the editorial. A victory for Laval, although most likely a temporary one.

Are classes abolished in France? One would infer that from your statement "if he tries it (loosing his armed hordes upon the country) he will find a united nation ready for him." Doesn't the word nation include the finance oligarchy, munition makers, industrialists, exploiters of every kind who would rather have fascism than a Soviet France? And how about the French army officers? Are they not a part of the nation? Will these elements unite against the Croix de Feu or are they going to unite against the growing proletarian unity against fascism, war and for the defense of the Soviet Union?

The answer is obvious. The class struggle is raging in France. The unity of the C.G.T. and the C.G.T.U. is the greatest stronghold behind the Front Populaire to deal the death blow not only to the Croix de Feu but to capitalism in its entirety.

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There will not be a united nation against La Roque, but a united working class and its allies, the poor farmers and the petty bourgeoisie.

E. KREININ.

An Old Guardist Surrenders

The following is taken from a general press release sent out December 16 by Local New York of the Socialist Party. It comprises the statement of Jack Altman executive secretary of Local New York on the appointment of Charles Solomon as a magistrate.—THE EDITORS.

The acceptance of the appointment by Charles Solomon, a prominent Old Guard leader, is further proof of the charge we have made that the Old Guard is more concerned with political bargaining than with Party building. In a letter addressed and read to the Party membership meeting held a week ago Sunday, Norman Thomas described the Old Guard as possessed by a "desire to reduce the Socialist Party to a little group to use for bargaining with labor politicians and even with old Party officeholders who have jobs to give out." Mr. Solomon's appointment now leaves no doubt.

The charge we have made against the Old Guard of being politically overfriendly with the Fusion administration was based on a series of events. Not only did the Old Guard refuse to wage a real campaign against the Sales Tax which LaGuardia imposed on the workers of the city, but when the unemployed, under Socialist leadership, demonstrated for adequate relief at the city hall, Mr. Waldman rebuked them publicly with the statement that "we don't believe in nagging the administration."

Mr. Solomon's is the second appointment of an Old Guard Socialist by the Fusion mayor to the judiciary, and revives in the minds of Party members the occasion at the City Central Meeting of February 6, 1935, when Murray Baron, a prominent Socialist in this city, and manager of the Suitcase, Bag and Portfolio Makers Union charged on the floor of the City Central Committee that a section of the Old Guard was "trying to ingratiate itself with the Fusion administration." Mr. Baron was summarily removed from the City Executive Committee of which he was a member and was permanently denied the right to speak on the floor of the Central Committee.

It is a peculiar coincidence that on the very day that Mr. LaGuardia announced the appointment of Mr. Solomon, he participated in a fascist mass-meeting in Madison Square Garden over the public protest of Norman Thomas and a group of progressives. The membership of the Socialist Party has indicated by its acts in the past few weeks that it will no longer permit the Party name to be compromised by association with Mr. LaGuardia or any other proponents of the economic and political order which Socialists are pledged to oppose.

It is significant, too, that even before Mr. Solomon's acceptance of the magistracy, which was not unexpected, his own branch voted to repudiate the Old Guard and to support our efforts in behalf of the Socialist Party.

At the present time, out of 36 branches that have voted and reported on the results, 26 have repudiated the Old Guard, precisely because of such incidents in recent Party history. The news of Mr. Solomon's appointment will increase our large majority even beyond our original expectations.

The Socialist Party of New York is definitely opposed to the program of the LaGuardia administration. His announcement that he will maintain the Sales Tax in New York will arouse the opposition of the labor unionists of this city as well as that of Socialists. The Socialist Party of this city pledges itself to a campaign that will wipe out the Sales Tax, LaGuardia's system of taxing the poor instead of the rich.

Letters in Brief

A campaign to place thirty-nine striking employes of Consumers' Research in desperately-needed jobs, has been launched by the Consumers' Research Strike Aid Committee. The Committee, in part, consists of Heywood Broun, the Rev. John Haynes Holmes and Congressman Vito Marcantonio. Most of the strikers are highly-trained technicians or office workers who are willing to go anywhere and to accept any type of employment. The Strike Aid Committee is located at 41 East 20th Street, New York City.

To create a closer bond between artists and workers in Baltimore, an exhibition was held in the Baltimore Workers School on December 8. Many of the city's artists showed their work which dealt mainly with working-class life.

The Southern Workers Defense Committee announces a meeting on December 21 at Labor Temple (243 East 84 Street, New York) on "We Organize the South." The speakers are Robert Minor, Mother Bloor, Hal Jackson, Jane Speed and Robert Wood.

The League of American Writers strongly protests the barring of Sinclair Lewis' *It Can't Happen Here* and Heywood Broun's *It Seems to Me* from the library of Townsend Harris High School in New York City. Six other books, among them *I, Claudius* by Robert Graves, *The Street I Know* by Harold Stearns and *Thunder Over the Bronx* by Arthur Kober were also removed from the list. The League writes that the books by Lewis and Broun "instead of being barred out of high schools, should be made optional reading for all students and compulsory reading for all principals."

Henry Hart, Morris Watson, Albert Hirsch and Wallace West will speak at a symposium on "Channels of Unconscious Propaganda." The meeting is held under the auspices of the Fortnightly Forum, 4308 43 Avenue, Sunnyside, Long Island and will take place on Sunday evening, December 22.

The New Pioneer, a magazine for boys and girls, announces that its January issue will be entirely edited, written and illustrated by the young people who read it. This is an important event in the children's movement and is already creating enthusiasm throughout the country.

Albert E. Salsburg feels that the anti-fascist quarterly of THE NEW MASSES was lowered in tone and character by the inclusion of cartoons and articles that were "apparently meant to be humorous but in reality were little short of being vulgar." Robert Forsythe's article was, however, "remarkable."

John Weston expresses strong enthusiasm for the all-round excellence of THE NEW MASSES. He also says the Spivak articles "are splendid and exciting." Cole Grimell regrets that Spivak, in his Olympic Games article, failed to ask Dr. Lewald how "colored competitors would be treated." "I understand that Negroes are *'untermenschen'* and that the Nazis allow themselves to compete only with *'ubermenschen.'*"

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

Which Books for Your Children?

SOME months ago THE NEW MASSES received a letter from a parent asking for help in interpreting to her boy, in his own terms, the world of conflict and contradiction in which he is growing up.

Our correspondent is, no doubt, only one of many thousands of parents who, having succeeded in clarifying the situation to their own satisfaction, now face the problem of making their children aware of what is going on about them, of trying to reconcile the history-book America, of plenty and equal opportunity for all, with the hunger and privation which meet them on every hand outside and, only too often, inside the school walls. It is common knowledge in the class-room that Johnny is absent so much because he has no shoes and that the only meal Margaret gets every day is the free lunch provided by the school, if and when it is so provided. And Jane comes home from school in tears because Helen isn't allowed to play with her any more: "Helen says I'm poor and poor is bad. *Is* poor bad?"

It is a far more complex problem than the question of sex education which so agitated child "specialists" a few years ago. Some of them were too inclined to trace most human problems back to the fact that little William was informed at the age of four that babies were originally found under rosebushes. The hue and cry succeeded in producing a few adequate books for children which, although they gave disproportionate space to the birds, the bees and the flowers, did finally get around to the human organism. And this, after years of prudery and hypocrisy, was an important move forward.

But for the present we must despair of finding ready-made answers, with diagrams, to questions about the simple *economic* facts of life. Certainly it is not to be found in the vast body of children's literature which has grown up within the last dozen years. True, there is springing up on the Left a small but sturdy collection of books which are making an honest attempt to tell children just what is happening around them. But so far the books are few and not readily accessible to the masses of children. They are not to be found in school and public libraries, sources on which most children are dependent since it is financially out of the question for their parents to buy books.

We cannot ignore the danger in this situation. Those of us who grew up on "series," or the Blue Fairy Book or the works of the Brothers Grimm (scarcely a book but had its little elf or brownie running around solving everybody's problems!) can scarcely realize what has happened to the children's book trade within the last ten years. From a small but lucrative adjunct to the Christmas market, it has developed into a giant industry. Some 500 *new* titles for children alone rolled off the presses in 1934. And there must be many more than that number this year. Books of real beauty there are, in quantity; in fact children's books grow more beautiful in physical make-up every season. But the books themselves are for the most part cheap and meretricious when not downright vicious. Prices are so high that few parents even of the middle and professional classes can comfortably afford them. And the publishers have resorted to all the usual ballyhoo to insure a large sale to libraries.

PEOPLE who would dismiss these comments as needlessly apprehensive would do well to examine some of the recent products for children. They are as firmly geared to the status quo as the industry itself. Books on the "old South," reeking with nostalgic sentimentality, books on our heroes of industry—Hearst, Van Sweringen, Andy Mellon, condescending books about Negroes, books with anti-Semitism lurking in the background, books of whimsy, all ballyhooed to the skies by the vested interests of the children's book-world who would have us believe that children are somehow insulated from the hardships that surround the rest of us and live in a dreamland compounded of English nurseries, Kensington Gardens and Never-never land.

The field of children's books has produced some labor-baiters of the first water. William Heyliger, for instance, one of the more respectable writers of boys' school and sport stories, has recently switched from football to "vocational" stories that would bring joy to Hearst's troubled heart. All the strikes are fomented by outside agitators and are defeated by the loyalty of our boy hero. In Heyliger's latest, *Ritchie of the News,* the story of a boy who makes good in a small-town newspaper, he goes a step further. The town shoemaker who dares occasionally suggest that Ritchie is overworked and underpaid has his head broken, his windows smashed and is forced to leave town—serves him right, the malcontent. Heyliger has a huge following among boys and such lessons in technique are not exactly useless in the business of training young fascists.

With the crisis have come the "depression" stories, mostly heart-rending tales of rich little boys and girls who can't go to boarding school because Papa's bank failed. The boys usually ship to South America, brave lads (so that the schools will buy copies for supplementary reading in South America—you've got to hand it to the canny publishers!) and become great men in the rubber fields, while the girls go to the local high school and see it through. Probably the foulest of the lot is *Shanty Ann.* Ann and Daddy Tom have only eleven cents to their name when they find a little Hooverville somewhere in California. They set to work building themselves a shack of discarded oil cans salvaged from the neighboring dump. Ann and Daddy Tom are blissfully happy in their little home until Ann finds a package of greenbacks which

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somebody stole from the local millionaire. He rewards her handsomely by promising to send the bus to take her into school every day so that she will never have to leave her dear little nest in the dump. *Shanty Ann* could be dismissed as merest drivel were it not that the author, Grace Moore, is so widely read.

Surprisingly enough, out of all this depression stuff has emerged one really honest attempt to give young readers a realistic picture of working-class life. In *Bend in the Road* Margaret Raymond has made no attempt to prettify conditions in the factory where Martha works, or the crowded little apartment which she shares with two other girls. With the crash the factory institutes drastic wage-cuts; Martha leads a protest and is promptly fired. After the first shock of disillusionment she realizes that from now on her place is with the working class in its struggle for better conditions. Although Miss Raymond has confused some of the questions, *Bend in the Road* still remains important as the first real novel for children published here, one actually based on class issues.

As in the case of *Bend in the Road,* there are times when the demand for a book is so obvious and success so assured that the publisher willingly complies. In response to the live interest in books about the Soviet Union came the publication of Ilin's works for children. Ilin needs no introduction to adults: his *New Russia's Primer,* a story of the first Five Year Plan, has been widely read. Following the *Primer* came *Black on White,* a history of book-making and printing from the days of the "human library," the story-teller. Ilin never for an instant neglects the social implications of the printed word. *What Time Is It?* and *One Hundred Thousand Whys,* are perfect for children and parents who like their facts straight. But Ilin's latest work, *Men and Mountains,* is unquestionably his finest—indeed, it is one of the finest books by any author recently issued. For the first time we have a book suitable for older children (and adults as well) wherein we see the actual relation of the earth's forces to the life of man.

Men and Mountains (as those who read the review in THE NEW MASSES, December 3, will remember), is the story of the enormous changes—reclamations of the desert, creation of new plant life, changes of river-courses, changes of the weather—now being made consciously by man for the good of man under socialism. Written for children who live in a world where the greatest conflict of all has been resolved, *Men and Mountains* can splendidly serve as a preliminary education for our children in the differences between two worlds.

THERE remains our world, however, and the job of showing it as it really is to the children who must live in it and who must be prepared to change it. *Hans Sees the World,* by the German Liza Tetzner, is so far the best answer to our problem. Parents will have a hard time finding it, for it is not in libraries or in many bookshops. Nor has it, nor will it ever receive a Newberry medal. And yet the story of Little Hans, son of a worker killed by hot steel in a mill, who sets out like any boy in a fairy tale to seek his fortune—but this time it is not gold or a king's daughter but only bread for his mother—is a masterpiece of its kind. It has a new and strange magic which leads Hans into a world of bitterness and hunger but invests his exploits with merriment and adventure. Hans finds a friendly rabbit to help him in his search: Trillewipp, a magic rabbit who can take off his ears and with a bit of wood and string can turn them into aeroplane propellers. He agrees to keep Hans, but he is puzzled: "Do you mean to tell me that among you human beings one man has a lot and the others go hungry?" Hans and Trillewipp fly to America, the land of plenty, and in the process see the world and a pretty sad world it is. In the course of their travels they accidentally land in the U.S.S.R. Here Trillewipp is set free by the G.P.U. "The Tcheka forbids cruelty to animals." Incidentally Trillewipp is enchanting—sensible, resourceful, cautious as any real rabbit should be!

It is amazing that with its numerous episodes the story does not lose its intensity for a moment. This book is without doubt required reading for children—and their parents. But for boys and girls who might feel superior to a magic rabbit we recommend *Eddie and the Gypsies,* from the German of Alex Wedding. Eddie's father loses his job and Eddie secretly takes to selling papers to eke out a living for the family. The Gypsy girl, Rollmops Willy, Max, the Communist's son, are real enough to satisfy the most exacting young realist. The story is told with much sly humor and illustrated with photographs.

The historical tales by Geoffrey Trease are excellent antidotes for too much Robin Hood and his merry men. Trease combines his history and legend with a healthy working class background and with excellent results. In *Bows Against the Barons* he creates a new Robin, perhaps not so merry as the standard version but a staunch, brave and kind friend of the dispossessed: a working-class leader who plans and leads a peasant revolt. The revolt is crushed and Robin Hood is bled to death by a traitorous abbess, as in the original legend, but Dickon,, a runaway serf lad and the beloved Little John are left to carry on the work. In *Comrades for the Charter* Trease recounts the period of the Chartist revolt. Around the exploits of two lads roaming the countryside in search of food and work are woven the important events of this movement which, ill-fated as it was, won for the English workers their democratic rights.

IN America the Young Pioneer movement has been slowly creating a children's proletarian literature of its own. It has the advantage over foreign products in being thoroughly indigenous, concerning itself with familiar problems of working-class children and making use of a simple American vocabulary. Obviously this literature was intended originally for the use of children in working-class organizations—and it still retains the mark of sectarianism. In fact, it is doubtful that the average child, already to some extent corrupted by the type of book described earlier in this article, would grasp its implications or be vitally interested in it. *Battle in the Barnyard* by Helen Kay should have the widest appeal. It ought to be an excellent supplementary text in Class Struggle I, expressing the struggle between exploiter and exploited in terms of ants, chickens and pelicans. Although the picture-book makeup and the illustrations (which are stunning) seem to fit it for use with younger children, the children of picture-book age would probably fail to make the desired and necessary association between the barnyard and its human counterpart.

The New Pioneer magazine has printed a few excellent stories, some of which have been collected in the *New Pioneer Story Book.* Myra Page's *Pickets and Slippery Sticks,* a story of the friendship among four black and white children in the South, Martha Campion's *What Am I Bid?,* a farm-foreclosure episode told with a repressed excitement that makes it effective, *Bloody Sunday* by Moissaye J. Olgin, a moving recital of Father Gapon's march to the Czar, are among the best in the volume.

The late Harry Alan Potamkin's version of *Our Lenin,* based on the child's life of Lenin issued in the Soviet Union, would undoubtedly be the apple of any Young Pioneer's eye. It is generously illustrated by William Siegel and includes original material collected from reminiscences of Lenin's sister by the author.

SUCH beginnings entitle one to look forward to a really rich literature for children. It is unfortunate that in discussing the books already produced one must make reservations: they are for a few children and not for all. We cannot plead too strongly for honest children's books created not only for Young Pioneers and children interested in the working-class movement—who need them least—but for the broad masses of children who are threatened by the poison generated by the commercial children's presses which are constantly flooding schools and libraries. A healthy body of children's literature can fight this poison, can urge children away from false dreams and prepare them for struggle. But ours must be a literature which will unite all children—not only children of the working classes and of the unemployed, to whom bosses and wage-cuts, hunger and torn shoes and threadbare clothing are old familiar evils, but those others as well who, though they may never have heard of a strike or scab, may still wonder occasionally if "poor is bad" and who will find themselves threatened one of these days and forced to

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the good, honest fisher boy in love with the second daughter orates on a realistic fight against conditions. That's the trade-union contribution. The rest is romantic psychological nonsense. And it is particularly nonsensical when placed in San Diego—as *Weep for the Virgins* is placed—where the repercussions of the maritime strike have influenced workers on the waterfront up and down the Pacific Coast. I'm not trying to make a case for plays dealing solely with strikes. But certainly *Weep for the Virgins* is about as untrue a picture of American working-class life as can be found. How the Group Theater ever fell for the play is a question the Group Theater alone can answer.

BRUCE MINTON.

A Spoonful of History

THE sudden and tragic conclusion to the career of Charles Stewart Parnell constitutes one of the most bitter episodes in the history of the Irish people. Descended from a land-owning family of Irish patriots and largely motivated by his hatred and distrust of the English oppressors, Parnell, as a young man, entered the House of Commons from an Irish constituency, an economic and political illiterate. Quickly he learned that the English treated Irish M.P.s with contemptuous disregard. He sat quiet, learning the rules of the game he would have to play and his first move, which led to his rise, came when he rose one day to answer the English, who had characterized Irish martyrs as murderers, by throwing the gauntlet into their face. He rose to the position of Irish Leader and welded under his strong and dictatorial hand a unified Irish Party which went into the House of Commons to vote and act almost as a man. He pursued a policy of parliamentary maneuvering and obstructionism, backed with threats of extra-parliamentary action and he carried the Irish question into English politics by lining up the Irish vote in England. Thanks to his balance of power position, he held the fate of Prime Ministers in the hollow of his hand and did succeed to the extent of forcing Gladstone to have a Home Rule Bill read in the House. His political undoing came as a result of his intense and passionate love for Katie O'Shea, the wife of a profligate Irish renegade, Captain Willie O'Shea. When O'Shea treacherously sued for divorce, Parnell's private life was flung like mud across the tattle sheets and Gladstone was able to become a moralist and to refuse to deal with the Irish Party until they dismissed their leader. Parnell was willing to step down from his position of leadership if Gladstone would make terms and he pleaded and insisted with his lieutenants, eloquently asking them not to sell him cheaply. However, the Irish Party was split. Renegades like Tim Healy and genuine revolutionists like Michael Davitt, who wanted more democracy within the Irish Party than did Parnell, split with him and Ireland was torn by one of the most bitter and internecine political fights in its history. The split played into the hands of the Liberal Party, which had previously jailed Irish patriots and revolutionists and the Liberals were able to play the role of English capitalism [illegible] successful hand. Divide and con[illegible] for a longer period.

Parnell died tragically, fighting to the last. His faith in his power and prestige with the Irish people was shattered when elections went to his opponents. The clergy rose against him and played their contemptible role in Irish life and they were a powerful factor in his undoing. At one time, previous to this fiasco, Michael Davitt outlined a probable lineup for an Irish Parliament, were it granted under a Home Rule Bill. And in his prognostication, he suggested that there would be a National Conservative Party under the leadership of Parnell. Parnell was a bourgeois nationalist revolutionary, himself a landowner, a man with a quiet and resolute will and power, a keen intelligence, completely courageous. His role was a progressive one, largely because of the circumstances of the political struggles in which he was engaged. And his demise left a lasting bitterness in Ireland.

Here is material for a real drama, a moving and powerful tragedy. And how does this material fare under the hands of the late Elsie Schauffler in the play now running and merrily attracting the mink, fur and swallow-tail trade? The basic weakness of the play comes from the fact that the author, the director and the producers are all, apparently, political illiterates. As a result the love element, the background of the English drawing room, Victorian co[illegible], expensive sets are all used in place c[illegible] political elements of the drama. The author sticks closely to th historical outlines of the story until the scene, when Parnell, in order to permit itchingly sad ending, dies prematurely in th arms of Katie O'Shea. There are two scenes in the play that are respectable, the last two, and one of these presents a meeting in a committee room when Parnell's lieutenants rise against him and disregard his pleas, "Don't sell me cheap." But two scenes do not make a play. As a result, we get a love story borrowing the prestige of history. In addition, we have it produced by two young men from Harvard who went all the way to Englan to obtain a leading man whose voice, whos total characterization makes a strong man into a weakling, and an English actress to play Katie O'Shea with nice clothes and a lovely voice. The result is that we have a play which will enable the mink, fur and swallow-tail trade to think they are witnessing traged and seeing history in an English drawir room. All that can be said of *Parnell* is th it is an inexcusable bore.

JAMES T. FARRELL.

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Second, the theme is realized by the use of the very essence of the picture-book form. The attack comes with alternate blows of the word, the picture, the word, the picture. (People who look at the pictures first and then go back and read the text are going to miss something and not know why.) The fibre of the book is in these interweavings, in the penetration of one by the other, in the completion of one by the other. The ...ord does something to the picture, makes it ...ore than what it is by itself; the picture ...creases the significance and effect of the ...xt. You can't take one away and have ...ft more than a very small fraction of the ...ole. Gellert has sensed this relation even ...re here than in his *Capital*. He has given ...r to the text those things for which it is ... fitted: the recording of the flow of ... and space, the accumulation of factual ...ail, the reporting of actions and conversa... The drawings contribute the intensi...ation of the action into the unforgettable ...age or symbol and by selection and exag...ation give significance to the detail. To ... the one point of question as regards basic ...cture lies in the difference in points of ... behind the text and drawings. The ...ds are Comrade Gulliver talking and the ...wings are Gellert seeing; or to put it ...ther way, the text is first-person singular ... the drawings are third-person straight. ...e strength of the interplay between the ...o would have been greater had the text ...n third person as well. Occasionally, too, ... visual side seems a bit fragmentary, the ... to have not quite enough meat in it. ... if this is a fault, it is because Gellert ...nded that they should be in certain in...ces fragments, not that he tried to make ...n more and failed.

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LYND WARD.

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The Theater

No Tears For the Virgins

IT WAS all very tragic, with those little human touches of comedy and farce that lighten up even the pathetic lives of the "poor." But in the end, everything went wrong and the audience filed out of the theater, having been instructed in the psychology of the working class. Nellise Child's play, *Weep for the Virgins,* didn't suffer from the production: the Group Theater did a good job, the sets were admirable, the acting always adequate and in the case of Evelyn Varden cast as the fantastic mother of three lost virgins, truly excellent. But something was wrong. Miss Child, the playwright, sat down to picture working-class life. The locale is a bedraggled house in San Diego, just behind a fish cannery. At frequent intervals throughout the play the cannery whistle blows and the characters remark about it and I suppose the intention is to build up an atmosphere of dread and a sense of impending doom like the drums in *Emperor Jones.* That's as close to the factory as the audience ever gets. True, the characters have a hard time earning enough money to realize their ambitions and life is hard and here the psychology comes in.

For psychology is the basis of the play. Miss Child had a pretty valid idea. Screen magazines, the radio, the movies have given many Americans a false hope of romantic success. The mother of the three Jobes virgins has built her life on this illusion: her daughters must "amount to something," must have careers and fine marriages. And the girls blindly accept their mother's ambitions. Each yearns for money, for fame, for escape. A good idea—but *Weep for the Virgins* does no more than state it.

The action is in good old feature-picture style. The oldest girl, in order to earn more money than she can make at the cannery, takes a job in a dive. The first evening she meets a sailor, looks at him, drinks a cocktail or two, passes out, wakes up in a hotel with the sailor and finds she has fallen in love. He goes to Hawaii—she renounces him because she feels she must stick to the family. The baby arrives and there's scandal at home. The second daughter tries stealing as a solution, nearly murders a man and runs away with the police after her. The third, at sixteen, diets so that she can become a dancer. A neighborly carpenter, age fifty or so, tempts her with food and persuades her to marry him. She discovers her mistake too late.

It all goes to prove that false ideals ruin the American proletariat. Miss Child has been quoted in the press: "I'm just a trade unionist, that's all." But though the characters live behind a fish cannery, it never occurs to them or to anyone in the community to consider that trade unions might improve their economic position. Of course,

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sell himself to big business as an anti-labor storm trooper, he will soon find that fascism destroys not only the rights of labor, but proceeds to destroy the rights of the salaried employe and small professional. As in Germany and Italy the destruction of the trade unions would be accompanied by the destruction of all independent organizations including those of the middle class.

Fascism has nothing to offer to the poor and middle farmer, the small salaried employe, the impoverished professional, the petty shopkeeper, all the lower sections of the American middle class. They are in acute distress and fascism seeks to turn their discontent against their own fundamental interests by mobilizing them against labor. In fighting against labor they would fight against everything that they themselves have struggled for all their lives: economic security, participation in cultural activity, peace and progress. For the success of fascism means the destruction of all of these middle-class ideals.

It is at this point that Mr. Corey makes one of his most important contributions. He traces the history of the American middle class—its struggle for a society of small property owners and enterprisers, and its crushing defeat by the trusts and the financial oligarchy. He reminds them of their revolutionary past and traditions, how they transformed economic and political grievances into revolutionary struggles and drove on to independence. They utilized demonstrations and boycotts, exactly the forms of mass action so distasteful to the property patriots of today. They boldly declared that "whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends (life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness) it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it."

The lower middle classes must unite with the workers and conduct actions that are in line with the best revolutionary traditions of American history. The only chance of survival for the so-called small man is to break the chains of the capitalist relations that frustrate and enslave him, and go forward to the establishment of a new social order. These actions will take place under different conditions than those that prevailed in 1776. The middle-class people will be fighting for a different goal. But they can only be true to their revolutionary traditions and their old ideals of progress, democratic rights and liberty, if they ally themselves with the workers against their common enemy — capitalism.

Many middle-class people are still unconvinced of this. They point to the present lack of unity within the ranks of labor as proof that the middle class must look elsewhere for allies. The answer to this is a broad Farmer-Labor Party, a coalition party of workers, poor and middle farmers, and the masses of urban middle classers. Such a political party would be the practical expression of an alliance which would enable middle-class people to fight for their with the workers achieve the advance of fascism in the United States. The workers are forging the unity of labor and therefore offer an alliance that will be of immediate benefit.

About such important tactical problems Mr. Corey is silent, usually mentioning them only in a footnote. But the whole line of the book leads to the fundamental question: what are middle-class people to do? and he fails to give a programmatic or a reassuring answer. There are other shortcomings in the book. For instance, Mr. Corey fails to define the middle class with any degree of exactness. Thus in one place he incorrectly lumps clerical workers with the middle-class groups. At another place he contradicts himself and goes to great lengths to prove that they are really members of the working class. He continues as in his previous book to attribute the decline of capitalism to a mysterious exhaustion of so-called long-time factors of expansion. And in his treatment of fascism he makes some curious points that do not make for clarity.

But these are errors that do not lessen the value and wide appeal of the book for middle-class audiences. Mr. Corey has made many valuable contributions to the discussion of middle-class problems. The conclusions can be made broader and sharper by further discussion and above all they must be linked with the practical program of a farmer-labor party.

It should be emphasized that here is a book that you should get at once and one that you should persuade all of your middle class acquaintances to read.

DAVID RAMSEY.

The Eye and the Mind

COMRADE GULLIVER, by Hugo Gellert. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York. $2.50.

FOR years the dominant impulse behind the work of nine out of ten of our artists has been a decorative impulse. This is true both of the purveyors of simple rhythms in line and color and of those who, eschewing decoration as such, concern themselves with representing life or rendering form. In either case the prime aim is to call forth in the audience a sensation of beauty. This may be superficial or it may be profound, it may be obvious or obscure, but the differences are of degree and not of kind. Because of this domination, it is the rare artist today who does not find himself in a dead-end street, struggling with the surface of his time, bewildered by an onrushing world. Hugo Gellert is one of the rare ones. Long ago he found the one road that today can save the artist from the dead-end street: the will to understand the central fact of the life about us, the impulse to express that understanding, the conviction that in that expression lies one of the means of changing the world.

Anyone who builds on this foundation soon finds that the old vessels do not always hold the new fire well. He is faced before long with the necessity of developing new forms to work in, forms better suited to the expression of the life of our times and capable of reaching larger numbers of people. The picture book is such a form.

As a modern medium it is still young. On the technical side much more progress has been made in its use for children, but there are enough examples of its powers of communication for an adult audience to enable us to see that as it emerges it has definite characteristics. It is not to be confused with the illustrated book or the book of drawings or photographs done spasmodically on random themes, then edited, reproduced and printed together. It requires judgment by its own standards and not by standards that may apply to prose or picture separately.

Comrade Gulliver is the most importar picture book that our country has produ This is a measured estimate and stands spite some defects which cause the book fall short of what it might have been.

Its importance rests on three things. Fi it encompasses what is by any man's sta ards a major theme. At a time when t whole of the capitalist world festers r erupts in a multitude of places and manne the easier thing to do is to take a corner a stick to it. But Hugo Gellert has made flank attack. He says in effect "Insanity c only be recognized through the eyes of sane." And so he finds that the great C liver had a great grandson born and bre

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This change in the composition of the middle class has important social and political implications. At first the new salaried groups identified their interests with monopoly capitalism. They did not join in the fight of the independents against the trusts, since the latter created their jobs and gave them the possibility of advancing up the economic and social ladder. But when the crisis hit them, these salaried groups began to realize that their interests did not dovetail with those of the big capitalists. They found themselves sacrificed to increase profits. They began to understand that like workers they were completely dependent upon Big Ownership for a chance to earn a livelihood, a chance that was withdrawn when it interfered with profit-making. The skilled salaried employes were not subject to speedup, salary cuts, technological unemployment and other blessings of capitalism that formerly were more exclusively reserved for the workers. The new middle-class groups who used to snub the working class now found themselves being rapidly proletarianized.

With a wealth of statistical material Mr. Corey shows that these middle-class people are "propertyless." They are the natural allies of the working class which also has no property. This section of the middle class is "property conscious," and has as Mr. Corey puts it, a bias for rights of ownership. But why defend property rights when you have no property of your own to defend? he asks them. When Big Ownership appeals to these people to rise in defense of property, it is merely using their illusion of sharing in this ownership to pull its own irons out of the fire.

Unfortunately, through the use of unprecise terminology, Mr. Corey does not make his important point clear to the reader. When he says that the great majority of the middle class is propertyless he means that they do not own the means of production. The factories, mines, mills, all the instruments of production, are in the hands of a small number of capitalists. However, middle-class people and the higher-paid workers own homes (although they are plastered with mortgages), they own autos and other personal property. The amount of this personal property grows smaller as the crisis drives the middle classes into greater ruin. But it is precisely at this sore point that fascist demagogues appeal to the prejudices of the petty bourgeoisie by playing on this confusion of personal property with ownership of the means of production. It is a bromide by now that what is needed is the socialization of the instruments of production and not the abolition of ownership of toothbrushes. Nevertheless, the fascist ideologue frightens the small salaried employe by telling him that the Reds want to take his pipe, his garden, his home. The consequences that flow from confusing personal property with capital ownership are of tremendous importance.

There is a wide gulf between the mass of propertyless members of the middle class, on the one hand and the small manufacturer and higher-salaried personnel, on the other. The majority of the small exploiters, seeking to stave off inevitable doom, support fascism and its policy of organizing capitalist decay in the hope of survival. They have utopian dreams of a return to small property, forgetting as Mr. Corey aptly points out, that under capitalism small capital breeds bigger and bigger capital. The little exploiter tries to gain concessions from his big rivals by offering to join them in a drive against labor. The higher paid personnel in big business have even more intimate connections with Big Ownership. Most of them are the capitalist planners, the "efficiency experts," the apologists of restricted production, the leaders of the storm troops of reaction.

It is because the various groups composing the middle class have antagonistic economic aims that a unified middle stratum does not and cannot exist. Their vacillating character is due to this disunity of aim and class connections. The upper layers of the petty bourgeoisie contact the big capitalists and are their main social and political props. The lower layers are being proletarianized and thrust down into the ranks of the working class. They have little or no property to defend and their interests dovetail with those of the workers.

Mr. Corey thus concludes that the middle class is "a mere aggregation of intermediate groups, whose fundamental interests are not identical." Having no clearly-defined class interests such as the workers possess, the petty bourgeoisie are incapable of carrying out decisive actions that would enable them to impose their rule upon society. Their revolt against capitalism must therefore take place either within the orbit of reaction or of labor. This role is their historic destiny and is the key to what they can do in the fight against capitalism. It is clear, then, why the ruling class deliberately overemphasizes the size and importance of the lower middle classes. The big bourgeoisie comprising less than one percent of the gainfully employed are too small a group to uphold their rule without the aid of other strata of the population. Hence they overstress the importance of the lower middle class in order to win them as allies. Mr. Corey shows that the working class today constitutes 75 percent of the gainfully employed, an overwhelming majority. It is not torn asunder by the irreconcilable conflicts that plague the other classes in capitalist society. It is the workers, the most homogeneous and important class, who must be the spearhead in any successful combat against capitalism.

The arguments of the Chases and the Binghams, who claim that it is the middle class that must lead the attack against the big bourgeoisie, are completely refuted by Mr. Corey. You cannot abolish the class struggle or the working class by invoking the image of a mythical public. Such appeals only play into the hands of the Hearsts and the Liberty Leaguers. It is to the advantage of these organizers of American fascism to pose as non-class or super-class representatives. Thus they can pretend to be opposed to the "selfish class interests" of radicals and progressives. No anti-fascist movement can hope to defeat fascist reaction unless it recognizes the leading role of labor.

To defeat the fascist danger there must be unity between labor and the lower middle-class groups. They have common interests and common goals. Yet these middle classers feel themselves superior to the manual worker, and have in the past displayed open hostility to labor. These snobbish feelings are utilized by fascist demagogues who try to convince the lower middle classes that their white collars have been soiled, not by capitalism, but by labor. If the middle-class person should

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Langston Hughes, Joseph Freeman, Samuel Putnam and many others have contributed regularly to Anvil and Partisan Review.

But while the ordinary conflicts seem to be absent, it must not be supposed that proletarian authors make up one happy family. As one of them writes, "there have been many differences and conflicts among us, based somewhat on individual gifts and temperament, but mainly on fundamental theoretical and even class differences."

One of these conflicting currents in revolutionary literature was attacked from the very start in the pages of Partisan Review. In an editorial article, Rahv and Phillips characterized this tendency as "leftism":

> Though it has seldom been explicitly stated in literary theory, "leftism" is so widespread that at this time its salient features are easily recognized. Its zeal to steep literature overnight in the political program of Communism results in the attempt to force the reader's responses through a barrage of sloganized and inorganic writing. "Leftism," by tacking on political perspectives to awkward literary forms, drains literature of its more specific qualities. Unacquainted with the real experiences of workers, "leftism," in criticism and creation alike, hides behind a smoke-screen of verbal revolutionism. It distorts and vulgarizes the complexity of human nature, the motives of action and their expression in thought and feeling.

THESE literary differences within the proletarian literary movement have multiplied during 1935. Particularly since the Writers' Congress, men and women of letters representing every group in American literature of the past several decades, have joined with the proletarian writers against fascism. The attack upon art in Nazi Germany has drawn together authors of diverse political and literary beliefs for the defense of culture. If the recently-published volume on the American Writers' Congress indicates the beginning of the change from a proletarian to an anti-fascist cultural front in this country, then the new anthology of *Proletarian Literature in the United States* is a record of the "crisis" period in American revolutionary literature that has just ended.

That volume, however, is an incomplete record. With the anthology belongs THE NEW MASSES, the thirteen issues of Anvil and the nine numbers of Partisan Review, especially with regard to the short story. If we added some of the contributions in the Short Story Number of THE NEW MASSES to the best stories in the other two magazines, the result would be an excellent companion volume to the proletarian anthology; and it would include the work of many of the new writers, whose best stories could not be squeezed into the first volume, although they deserved to be.

The change in the cultural front signalized by the Writers' Congress was reflected in the pages of Anvil and Partisan Review, apparently the only survivors of the little magazine movement of several years ago. Parti- ...ew No. 7 was devoted entirely to ... and contained many dissenting viewpoints on revolutionary criticism, fiction and poetry. Recent issues of both magazines also stressed the widening of the audience of revolutionary writing in this country, and pointed to the necessity of issuing a larger, broader and more regular publication. This finally resulted in the combination of the two magazines and the plan for the publication of a new literary monthly, to appear early in 1936.

As a literary monthly, the new magazine will publish short novels, stories and selections from unpublished books of fiction by new and old American and European authors; groups of poems and long poems by American, English, German, French and Russian writers; sketches by workers and literary reportage by European masters of this type of writing; literary letters from foreign countries as well as criticism by the leading revolutionary critics. The new magazine will continue to seek out and publish unprinted authors, including the first efforts of workers from the farms and factories.

The new publication has the support of older writers as well as of the younger generation.

Of such a project, Waldo Frank writes

> A literary magazine, such as you project—a magazine, that is, primarily cultural, with revolutionary premises, but free of the dogmas an rigidities of political strategy—is profoundly needed in this country. It can do a great work provided its editors reveal a creative and experimental vision, and allow it to be obscured by no exigencies of the moment: a great work in that cultural preparation for social-economic change, without which social-economic change miscarries.

Malcolm Cowley salutes the new venture in the following manner:

> I'm glad to hear the Partisan Review
> Will soon appear in an almost wholly new
> Format, combined with the fiction-flaunting Anvil
> And print young writers, so people will know
> that Granville
> H. and Isidor S. and Michael G.
> Joe F. and Robert F. and Robert C.
> And other of us graybeards aren't the only
> Prose proletarian pundits, and the lonely
> Young poets won't be lonely any longer
> And stories can be shorter, sharper and stronger
> And critics lay a heavier barrage
> And all reporting can be reportage
> And talent flourish, and in short I mean
> Hurrah, Red Front, hats off to your new magazine.
>
> ALAN CALMER.

The Dilemma of the Middle Class

THE CRISIS OF THE MIDDLE CLASS, by Lewis Corey. Covici, Friede. $2.50.

AMERICAN middle-class people have seen their familiar world wrecked by the crisis. They have lost their jobs, their savings, their homes. In confusion and distress they have turned to one false prophet after the other, hoping that he would lead them around the corner to prosperity. The middle classes were set into motion by the crisis. They are approaching the crossroads of their destiny. Their choice of direction, either left or right, will play an important part in determining the immediate future of the American people.

If they are not to be duped by unscrupulous fascist demagogues fishing in the troubled waters of middle-class discontent, then the members of the petty bourgeoisie must understand just what has happened to them. For without a clear understanding of their problems they will not know how to overcome their present difficulties, and how to choose the true road that leads to the security that they seek so desperately.

In Lewis Corey's latest book they will find an accurate explanation of their hopeless plight. It will enable them to get rid of many false notions that now block their union with the workers in a common front for economic betterment and against fascist reaction. They will discover what forces and people are really responsible for their declining economic position. The book will show the middle classes exactly where they stand in present-day American society and what prospects are in store for them. Thus book ought to help convince the vacillati ones that to support fascism means putt themselves completely at the mercy of t very reactionary forces which are responsib for their economic and social disintegrat

One of the high points of Mr. Co contribution is that it provides a factual fication of the Marxist analysis of the c acter and role of middle-class groups dur the epoch of capitalist decay. The fun mental social laws of Marxism are shown give the only sound explanation of the economic and social changes taking place in this country. He effectively disproves the nonsense peddled by certain intellectuals with personal axes to grind that the Marxist point of view does not hold true for the American scene. As in all countries, there are peculiarities in American society, but in treating some of them he proves that they fit into the general scheme of the Marxian analysis of capitalism.

Mr. Corey shows that the middle class does not and cannot exist as a homogeneous social unit. It is composed of groups drawing their incomes from small ownership—the little enterprisers who constitute the traditional petty bourgeoisie. But it also includes groups who sell special skills to the capitalists. They are the "new" middle-class groups of salaried technicians, managers, personnel directors, etc., who are a social by-product of monopoly capitalism. These new groups have displaced the small enterprisers as the most important section of the middle class since the crushing of the independents by the monopolies.

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

A New Magazine

IN THE nineteen-twenties most little magazines were creedless. Their contents were not held together by a basic point of view. Like the earlier Little Review, they were simply montgomery-ward catalogs of contemporary writing. "Rebels and reactionaries rub shoulders amiably and in perfect harmony in our magazine," ran the ad of one of these journals, which published work by "youngsters or greybeards, regardless of school, influence or tradition." The Dial modeled its literary garments after the latest European fashion plates, while Broom announced itself as a "clearing house" for literature. Even the "tendency" magazines of the time—which generally championed the work of a particular school or a new generation—were very confused about fundamentals and shirked an open partisanship.

During 1933-34 a new flock of little magazines appeared. They were different in at one important respect from most of predecessors. They did not make a ...tue of aimlessness. They followed in the ...adition of THE NEW MASSES. They were ...enly revolutionary, left, partisan in their ...ocial outlook. These terms made up their ...les and subtitles, and appeared in their ...ifestoes. Anvil, the first of these new ...azines (if we except transition journals Front and Left), announced that it was ...ing to try to present vital, vigorous mate... drawn from the farms, mines, mills, fac...ries and offices of America." From the same section of the country came the lively Left Front, which called for poems and stories dealing "with the lives of the workers in the prairie farms, in the coal mines of Illinois, the iron mines of Minnesota, in the stockyards of Chicago." Partisan appeared from the Pa ...ific Coast with an opening editorial—"Turn to the Left." From the east came the fiction magazine, Blast, and the poetry journal, Dynamo, which sought for verse that would "utter the deep social and class meaning of the turbulent days around us." Partisan Review, originally published as the organ of the New York John Reed Club, immediately took its stand against "the narrow-minded sectarian theories and practices" on the proletarian literary front.

This group of little magazines was largely the voice of a new literary generation. The young men of letters who wrote for these publications entered the literary scene just as the prosperity of the twenties was passing over the horizon. They were members of what one of them called the "depression" generation, as distinguished from the preceding "lost" generation, whose autobiography has been recorded in *Exile's Return*. The economic difference between these two groups was characterized in *You Can't Sleep Here*, one of the first novels of the new generation:

> This was not a lost generation. These young people had never found themselves. . . . We were the crisis generation who had never been absorbed into industry or the professions. . . . We had all the old problems. But we had also something new, the passing of economic security. We college and high school and public school graduates were certain of our economic future. The pile of lumber and cement under the billboards (to be used for building a shack in Hooverville) was (our) immediate economic future. The public comfort station down the block and left-over buns in the automat and hourly supervision by twirling bats were our certainties.

The literary aspects of this new generation were described by one of its literary critics, William Phillips, in an article published in Partisan Review:

> The latest literary generation may be called the proletarian generation, because it is the only unified group among the younger writers, and because most of its members are related in one way or another to the labor movement. . . . Besides, this generation is coming up at a time when the air is charged with discussions about proletarian literature, when the question is the axis of most significant writing today.

These new authors have appeared chiefly from two literary centers. One group from the Midwest has become associated with the Anvil, and includes Jack Conroy, Joseph Kalar, lumbermill poet, and H. H. Lewis, rhymester of the wheatfields. The other group has centered around Partisan Review, and includes Kenneth Fearing, Ben Field, Alfred Hayes, Edwin Rolfe, Philip Rahv and William Phillips.

However, this identification of the magazines with two geographic groups is false and misleading. For example, Nelson Algren, Meridel Le Sueur and Jack Balch, three of the best young story writers from the Midwest, are among the consistent contributors to Partisan Review, just as Saul Levitt, Harry Kermit and others, whose stories deal with New York life, are regular contributors to Anvil, while two of its three editors, Walter Snow and Clinton Simpson, are New Yorkers. The geographic antagonism in recent American letters between New York and America has seeped into proletarian literature, too. However, it is an artificial barrier, at least as far as the proletarian literary front is concerned. I do not think we have anything like a proletarian regionalism in American literature today. Although fiction writers like Jack Balch and Saul Levitt deal respectively with St. Louis and the Bronx, the underlying social motivation of both of them is the same, and it links them as members of one literary school.

Indeed, even the antagonism between generations does not seem to mean very much in proletarian literature. Instead of generations opposing each other — the familiar fathers-and-children complex in literature— the old groupings have split; more and more of their members have learned that the essential difference is not of schools or generations but of classes. Thus men of letters like James T. Farrell, Erskine Caldwell,

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take sides. We cannot afford to lose a single child.

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In the meantime we must content ourselves with the few worthwhile books which are at hand. The following may be recommended with a clear conscience to all children.

For Younger Children

Hans Sees the World, *by Liza Tetzner ($.50).*
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Millions of Cats, *by Wanda Gag ($1.50).*
The Teacup Whale, *by Lydia Gibson ($1.).*
Photographic Picture Book: Baby's First Book; The Farmer at His Work; On Our Farm (each 10c, Woolworth's).

[Prices listed as of Workers' Bookstores]

JEAN SIMON.

Facts Is Facts

THE TWENTIES, by Mark Sullivan. Scribner's. $3.75.

MR. SULLIVAN likes to think of himself as a journalistic Galahad in quest of the unadulterated Fact, a passionate lover of truth for its own sake. This is the self-conscious spirit in which he has written the history of "Our Times" from 1900 to 1925. His method of writing history, he assures the reader, "results in greater accuracy than any other." In this, the sixth and concluding volume of a series, he has succeeded, as in his other volumes, in climbing that sublime summit of impartiality which he achieves as a political commentator for The Herald Tribune.

A typical illustration of Mark Sullivan's gift for objective analysis is afforded by his discussion of the famous dynamite explosion in Wall Street, on September 16, 1920. It will be recalled that the bombings took place a few months after Sacco and Vanzetti were arrested on trumped-up charges. The country was suffering from a highly organized Red scare which culminated in the illegal expulsion of five Socialists from the New York Assembly. President Wilson had, not very long before, urged action for the curbing of radicals; Victor Berger had been scandalously deprived of his seat in the House of Representatives; the immigration authorities were deporting everybody in sight who was suspected of failing to kiss the stars and stripes before going to bed at night. Then the bombings, which were used, as might be expected, by the Mitchell Palmers and the Burlesons as an excuse for spreading the unholy terror. How does Mr. Sullivan report this situation? After noting, with magnificent impartiality, that nobody has ever solved the "mystery," neither the police nor the secret service, Mr. Sullivan adds: "An opinion held by the police, which seems logical, is that the explosion was an act of terrorism by radicals." When Logic raps at the door, Accuracy and Objectivity make a running dive for the window, without even bothering to open it.

Mr. Sullivan's disinterested observations drive us to revolutionary conclusions. Warren G. Harding, who is the hero of this volume, was distinguished by his "tolerance, charity, good-will, modesty, and humility." Harding's cabinet included, besides Albert B. Fall and Harry Daugherty, "three of the best public servants America has ever had—Hughes, Hoover, and Mellon." It was through Harding's "good-natured insistence" that Judge Gary of the United States Steel Corporation decided to slice four hours off the twelve-hour day. Harding "hated war, as intensely as Debs if less violently" and he arranged for the release of the great Socialist leader from the Atlanta Penitentiary because "It seemed to him wrong, out of tune with the spirit of America, that Debs should endure further punishment." (Mr. Sullivan adds, as an afterthought, that Harding, disturbed by industrial unrest which followed the War, considered this action a practical way to "checkmate the propaganda" which was being "fostered by a few radical leaders.") On the basis of Mr. Sullivan's impartial evidence, the workers' movement in this country should celebrate Harding Day with as much fervor as it now celebrates May Day. In justice to Mr. Sullivan, it must be mentioned that he does not propose a tax on the trade unions for the purpose of a revolutionary shrine at Marion, Ohio.

One obscure footnote in this volume justifies Mr. Sullivan's claim that he is a scrupulous reporter and it would be ungrateful to fail to notice it. Soon after Coolidge stepped into Harding's oil-splattered boots, he invited Mark Sullivan to make suggestions about his new job. The journalist proposed that Coolidge lift the level of American culture by honoring some of the poets: Robert Frost, Edwin Arlington Robinsor, Edna Millay. "'Frost? Robinson?' asked Coolidge meditatively, searching his memory —'I never heard of them. There was a fellow in Boston when I was in the legislature that used to write poems—he was a newspaper man—his name was McCarthy.'"

WALTER RALSTON.

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Two Jeffersonian Poets

VACHEL LINDSAY, by Edgar Lee Masters. Charles Scribner's Sons. $3.

MR. MASTERS has written a confused, careless, badly-proportioned book, but an important one for the student of American culture. He understands Lindsay because he is so much like him. Both of them were unmistakably and even self-consciously of the Middle West. Both came into prominence with the pre-war poetry renaissance. Both hated industrialism as a system of production and the machine as a factor in American life. Both were Jeffersonian democrats in their political thinking. To a great extent, Masters has only had to look into himself to understand Lindsay.

Insofar as they differed, it was largely because Masters was more rational, building his distaste for big business into a defense of southern agrarianism and the doctrine of state's rights. Lindsay, on the other hand, was illogical enough to glorify Lincoln, whom Masters recognizes as the instrument of the northern industrialists in their destruction of Jeffersonian values. Lindsay was a good deal like the average middle-class American, resenting large-scale monopoly capitalism when he was conscious of its evils but never really doubting or even examining its premises. He called himself at one time a Socialist ("Come let us vote against our human nature"), but it was only because the word signified a distaste for the status quo and a devotion to non-commercial principles. His ideal was a nation of small towns, rather like his own Springfield but more beautiful and more hospitable to poets.

The strength of Lindsay's poetry came from the fact that he genuinely represented an important section of the American people, even in his prejudices, which were numerous. He made no attempt to isolate himself from American life; on the contrary, he sought to be a poet of the people, meaning, naturally, middle-class people. He concerned himself with the highest ideals of his class, which he expressed with passion and often with beauty. "General William Booth Enters Heaven," "Old, Old, Old Andrew Jackson," "The Eagle That is Forgotten," "The Virginians Are Coming Again" and "Factory Windows Are Always Broken" are moving poems.

But the middle class had very little place for poetry of any kind, and the ideals that Lindsay expressed were cherished in memory only. They belonged to the great days of Jefferson and Jackson, not to the days of Roosevelt and Wilson. The middle class was made up for the most part of smug, avaricious people on the way up or frightened, avaricious people on the way down. The former would pay to see Lindsay go through his stunts on the platform, but they did not respond to his poetry. The latter were too worried to bother about him or any other poet.

Lindsay was a poet who needed a responsive audience. If he could have felt that his work was needed, he would have grown in confidence and power. As it was, he turned more and more to his infantile poetry-games, and finally he committed suicide. There were, as Masters shows, many psychological factors in his ultimate collapse, but it was the lack of external support that made his inner weaknesses fatal.

This is not, needless to say, Masters' interpretation, though he gives plenty of evidence for it. And even he, individualist that he is, realizes that Lindsay's suicide was a social tragedy. Something could have been done, he says, but all he can suggest is that some of the useless rich might have given Lindsay a subsidy.

A subsidy would have helped, but that was not primarily what was needed. As has been said, Lindsay, like other poets but perhaps to an uncommon degree, needed an audience. He also needed understanding. All his life he wandered about in a haze of unrealizable ideals. The ideals had once been splendid and they still had a certain meaning, but he could not reinterpret them for his age because he did not understand it. He was bound within the intellectual confines of his class. He could not grow; so he deteriorated—and died.

GRANVILLE HICKS.

Justice—for Millionaires

HELL IN GEORGIA, by Sasha Small. International Labor Defense. 2 cents.

A DANGEROUS WOMAN, by Sprad. American Committee for Protection of Foreign Born. 3 cents.

TEN YEARS OF LABOR DEFENSE, by Sasha Small. International Labor Defense. 5 cents.

THEY GAVE THEIR FREEDOM, by Rose Baron. International Labor Defense. 5 cents.

FROM daybreak to darkness these prisoners pick the red, powdery earth of Georgia. The hot, grimy sun bends their backs and a twenty-one inch chain binds their feet. At night they are locked into steel cages which holds twelve crowded bunks and scarcely enough room to stand upright in the aisles between the tiers. The fetid stench of stale sweat permeates the enclosed walls and the chains cling to their feet as they sleep. If they turn their bodies, they must shout, "Turning over" or the gunmen on guard may shoot. Sasha Small gives a vivid description of this daily routine in her chain gang "Hell in Georgia" pamphlet. To this same torture Angelo Herndon was sentenced from 18 to 20 years under an obsolete 1866 law because he organized a group of Negroes and whites to ask for adequate relief.

In some states such laws have never existed, nor is it always possible to link the person to an exploded bomb or gun, so another method is used to put active workers out of the way. Stella Petrosky, who has worked for twenty-one years in Pennsylvania and reared eight native born children, faces deportation to a post-war Poland. Besides being an active member of the Unemployment Council, she was sympathetic to the striking miners and for this she was branded "A Dangerous Woman."

Ten Years of Labor Defense and *They Gave Their Freedom* gives a list of labor leaders who were falsely imprisoned or killed and the efforts of the International Labor Defense to rally mass support, provide legal defense and financial aid to the victim and his family. The pamphlets are complete, well-written and should be read by everybody as an impressive indictment against our legal system. Sasha Small in writing of the work of the International Labor Defense states, "It seeks to show how it is that international crooks like Samuel Insull, the banker, murderers of workers like Henry Ford, tyrants who maintain private armies like Rockefeller, Morgan and Mellon are never hauled up before the courts and put in jail for their daily offenses—while the courts support thousands of crude frame-ups to put militant toilers in jail, to murder them, to terrorize millions of people; issue hundreds of injunctions smashing strikes and picket lines but never once prohibiting the bosses from using the police, their private armies, the National Guard and the United States army to shoot down unarmed strikers and pickets in every part of the country."

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Chicago's Art Show

THE Forty-sixth Annual Exhibition of American Paintings and Sculpture, held in the Chicago Art Institute, October 24-December 8, aroused more interest and controversy than any preceding one. The elect of Chicago were infuriated by it. But the thousands of visitors indicated that the American public is becoming more conscious of and more concerned with the trend of present-day painting than it has been in the past.

Chicago's "four hundred" did not hide their "critical" disapproval. Nor did they spare even the prize winners. Clyde Singer's "Sandy Valley" (Norman Wait Harris Silver Medal and prize of five hundred dollars) they called only less queer than Frank Mechau Jr.'s "Indian Fight" (Norman Wait Harris Bronze Medal and prize of three hundred dollars). John F. Stenval's "Slush at Dusk" (Honorable Mention) they termed "incompetent" and Zsissly's "Victoria" (William M. R. French Memorial Gold Medal) "frightfully ugly and repulsive." Nor was local price sufficient to condone the paintings of Chicago artists. Julio de Diego's "Grant Place" (Martin B. Cahn prize of one hundred dollars and Honorable Mention) was dismissed as "ludicrous in its figure distortion," while Aaron Bohrod, because he did not extol the beauties of Chicago suburbs, is labelled "deliberately outrageous" in his "Palos Park Landscape."

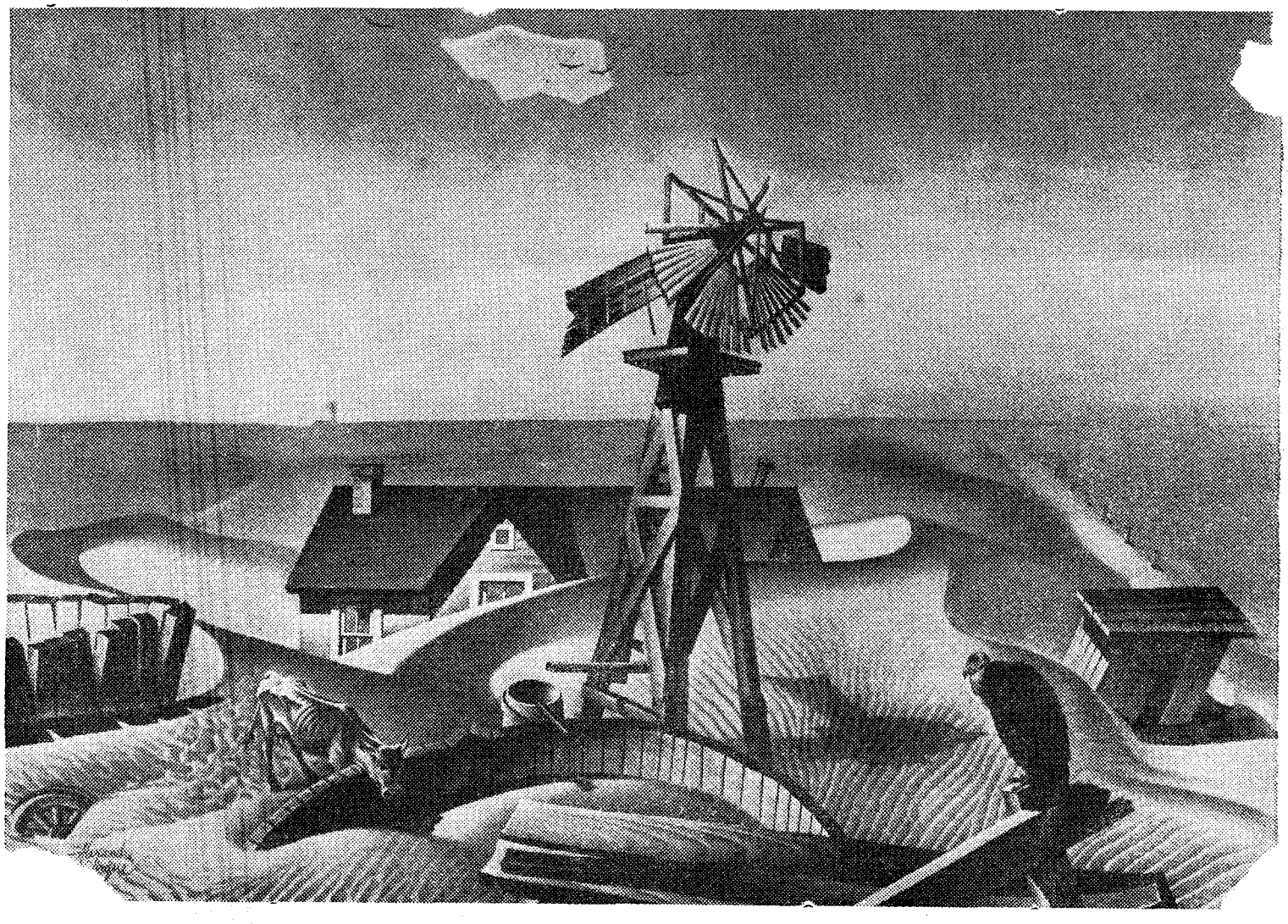
In her review in The Chicago Tribune on the opening day of the exhibition, Eleanor Jewett declared that she considered the group as a whole exceedingly depressing. True, many of the paintings betray moral and psychological breakdown; others have technical poverty and constructive weakness. The repulsive outweighs the attractive in the compositions. The show is a far cry from an exhibition of Barbizon landscapes. But when The Tribune reviewer calls the exhibition a menace to American art she displays a deplorable misapprehension of the nature of art. The role of painting is not to provide a convenient retreat. The function of a painter is not to cater to those who would escape from life. Great paintings exist as revelation and interpretation of the immediate world in which they appear. Great artists express the experience of the human race, the mind of the age in which they live

By way of illustration, consider Lester J Ambrose's "Dime a Dance." It is hard t imagine a more contemptuously depraved conception, totally lacking in plastic pictoria values, in health of outlook and nobility of aim. Yet, this very pictorial and psychological weakness is quite in keeping with the theme, the sensuality of an American dance hall frequented by such public heroes as Al Capone. Less a painting than a tabloid cover design, Ambrose's effort is the essence of a machine-age society — vicious, neurotic, pathetically pleasure-seeking.

The proletarian point of view predominates in the show. When social protest is not the theme, pessimism is at least the mood: agony, gloom, dejection—rarely sweetness, peace or joy. It is the art of a society in collapse, of humanity on the verge of either self-destruction or revolution, the warnings and lamentations of modern Jeremiahs. Vavak's overwhelmingly expressive compositions of a western dust-storm literally scream with pain and horror; implying the death-throes of a culture.

Those who object to such a show desire a different kind of art. But they cannot change the artist. They must change rather the society producing—and spurning—him.

WALLACE S. BALDI



...icken Area — *Alexandre H*

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The Theater

"Paradise Lost"

MY original intention was to review Clifford Odets' *Paradise Lost* as if I had come directly from the Longacre Theater to the typewriter, but since it must be plain even to the uninitiated that a week has intervened between the opening night of the Group Theater production and the need of finishing this review, it would be an obvious form of pretense to ignore the remarks of the New York critics and the controversy which has followed the opening of the play. Ordinarily, a delay and a chance to talk the performance over with others who have seen it tends to alter one's judgment of a drama. In this case, however, I find myself more convinced of the beauty and strength of the play the farther I get away from it. My first impression was enthusiastic; it becomes more so as I think back on *Paradise Lost* and discuss it.

Ever since Odets wrote *Waiting for Lefty* [illegible] *Awake and Sing,* he has been an important man in the theater. I was among those who had fears about his next work. [illegible]s a good knock-down-drag-out drama, [illegible]f excitement, theatrical movement and [illegible]al point. Although it had more depth [illegible]rstanding, *Awake and Sing* reminded [illegible]ays like *Another Language.* I had [illegible]easy feeling that it was another in the [illegible]es about wrangling families and although [illegible]lmired it for its dramatic rightness, I was [illegible]ehensive. What made both *Awake and* and *Lefty* significant was the talent [illegible]ts revealed and the freshness of his social [illegible]t of view. What they didn't convince me of was the richness of his mind. With *Paradise Lost,* there is no longer any question of his quality. In that fundamental sense which distinguishes an artist from a craftsman, he has advanced a hundred leagues at one step.

It would be possible to sit down with Mr. Lockridge of The Sun or Mr. Garland of The World-Telegram and pick flaws in *Paradise Lost,* just as they may be picked in Gorky's *The Lower Depths* and in novels by Tolstoy, Dreiser or Thomas Wolfe. If Tolstoy wants to stop in the middle of *War and Peace* and preach about the evils of war, I am not offended. If Wolfe says "Ah, Spring!" and goes on for forty pages of nature description, I may skip the forty pages but I do not denounce Wolfe as a poor novelist. Dreiser smashed the unity of *The Financier* by halting in the middle of it to relate at length the lives of each of the twelve members of the jury which was trying his hero. It was wrong according to the tenets of any school of writing and it was wonderful. There is something awesome and wonderful and untamed about all good art. There is something juvenile about critics who insist that every loose end be tied up, that no playwright should start anything he doesn't finish, that there should be a beginning and end of everything. They seem to have the longing of a lost child for security. If any strain of the mind is required, they refuse to follow. For them, then, the play becomes "diffuse," they don't "understand" it, it is "chaotic." From a strict sense of pride, I should think they would avoid admissions of that kind. *Paradise Lost* is hewn so compactly from one block, is so definitely all of one piece, that nothing but obtuseness can explain failure to understand it.

Briefly, it is a picture of the shellshock which comes to a circle of people as a result of the depression. Just as the waves of horror keep beating up in a community from the suicide of a beloved man, so do the waves of despair overwhelm the Gordon family and the Katz family. In the case of Leo Gordon (Morris Carnovsky), it is not the loss of money which affects him but the collapse of honor, the loss of decency and dignity. His partner, Marcus Katz (Luther Adler), is a man who is tortured both by his wife's sterility (the thing becomes pathological with both of them) and by his sense of being trapped by the failure of the Gordon-Katz leather business. What makes Odets a good playwright is his courage in combining the elements which make up such a character as Katz. The ordinary and simple thing is to keep a character straight as a string. If he has a trick of crooking his elbow, the crook of the elbow will represent him from first to last. Odets knows that no human is as simple as that and in a play which is definitely about the effects of the depression and might have been a popular success by the usual devices of playwrighting (a little tragedy here, a little comedy relief there, but the lines of action always so straight that the most stupid Broadway critic could grasp it), he has fashioned a full-bodied character which is as psychologically right and complex as life itself.

When the plot of *Paradise Lost* is set down flatly, it seems a ridiculous mélange of grief and disaster. The recitation of any tragic plot can be equally hilarious. It was a common device used against the old Russians ("Marie Spirodnovaya is married to Alexis and they have a daughter, Natasha, who has just murdered her husband with an axe"). But given the theme of *Paradise Lost,* it would be a refutation both of common sense and artistic integrity to treat it differently. That theme is the impact of the depression on the middle classes. It is a subject of transcendent importance in these times and it has been handled by Odets with the utmost honesty. Because all plays about family decay inevitably bring up memories of *The Cherry Orchard,* Odets is referred to as a young man who had been impressed too deeply by Chekhov, but it seemed to me that if comparisons were necessary, they could with more success be made with Sean O'Casey than with Chekhov. There are almost direct similarities between *Paradise Lost* and *Juno and the Paycock.* The character of Gus Michaels (Roman Bohnen) is a counterpart of the lusty old drunk of the O'Casey drama. The character of Julie Gordon (Sanford Meisner) who is suffering from the effects [illegible] sickness and acts rather as the [illegible] for the play resembles clos[illegible] *Juno.* Both move throu[illegible]

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mysterious, helpless figures, about which the action centers because of their passive attitudes. The way in which Odets uses Julie is an indication of his superb dramatic sense. The scene in which Julie comes upon his brother and Kewpie and realizes that they are talking about the certainty of his death is something to tear the heart. He senses what they have been talking about and he tries to protect them from the feelings they must have if they think he has overheard. The device Odets uses to tell of the death of Ben is equally striking. Old man Gordon answers the telephone and can't seem to hear properly. "Ben got what?" He turns to the others. "He talks so . . . I can't understand him. . . . Ben got something on the Grand Concourse." "Maybe a job," says Mrs. Gordon (Stella Adler) hopefully. "Maybe night work." The audience knows what Ben has got. He's got IT—his belly full of lead in an abortive stick-up. (I'm probably assuming too much; it was apparent from the reviews next day that some of the critics wouldn't have understood unless it had been posted as a bulletin in neon lights.)

With few exceptions the acting by the Group Theater is magnificent. America has not seen in our time a better performance than is given by Morris Carnovsky as Leo Gordon. He symbolizes the middle-class father, honest, despairing, willing to sacrifice everything but honor. He symbolizes him even more concretely in the last scene, where he tells what life could be and must be if America is to be a Paradise. Sincerity and character shine through every word Carnovsky utters. If this is tragedy, it is the tragedy of a man who doesn't deserve such a fate. Accordingly, it is tragedy in the deepest sense, that of a good man who is overwhelmed by causes beyond his powers. Luther Adler, as the psycopathic Katz, and Sanford Meisner as the helpless Julie give extraordinary performances, but extraordinary performances are no rarity in the Group Theater. They are finally getting to that group perfection which I have always secretly scoffed at. The results can be seen in the small roles. It would be impossible to forget a type like the homeless man of William Challee. There he is, a dirty, jolly, helpful bum—a perfect characterization by an actor who is on the stage only a minute and who will linger with me for years. As for Elia Kazan, somebody will be forced to write a play around that proletarian thunderbolt. But for an unfortunate bit of casting in the part of Libby in the first act, the play is almost perfectly acted. If there is another exception for me, it would be in the part of Old Gus (Roman Bohnen). I am inclined to blame Odets for this lapse. It is the part of an old Caspar Milquetoast and there is about it a trace of whimsy which does not belong in the play. What remains after I have reached this point is a feeling of beauty. *Paradise Lost* is beautiful. Not in the fake poetic sense but because of those inward moods and tortures which are part of every good play. What it gives me is a feeling of warmth and satisfaction—the satisfaction of sharing a deep experience of life. The faults are so unimportant as against the opportunity of meeting with an intelligence and intention of the first rank that it is difficult to be considerate with reviewers who feel that they have uttered a profound critical truth when they have pointed out that the furnace tender (Grover Burgess) is wearing the same flannel shirt after two years. These things seem very important to the gentlemen who are never content unless every piece of the dramatic pattern fits into place. As for those who think of the drama as a great opportunity for the expression of the hopes and actions and truth of human beings, they will not be much concerned with the thin-blooded representatives of Broadway. *Paradise Lost* is their play. It may not be a masterpiece but it gives me that feeling that I don't often have in a theater—the feeling that the theater is after all something worth fighting for.

ROBERT FORSYTHE.

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Between Ourselves

GEORGE SELDES is the author of *Sawdust Caesar,* the recently published book on Mussolini. While foreign correspondent in Italy, Seldes was expelled because he continued to write the truth about fascism.

Jean Simon, who writes on children's books in this issue, is a librarian in a Middle Western city.

Leane Zugsmith is the author of *All Victories Are Alike, Good-Bye and Tomorrow, Never Enough* and *Recognition.* She has written for Scribner's and Harper's and other magazines and has been active in various strikes of the Office Workers' Union. She is a member of the League of Women Shoppers and the League of American Writers.

A fourth chapter from Granville Hicks' forthcoming biography of John Reed will appear next week. The illustrations which appeared with last week's chapter were by Franz Masereel, a Belgian artist exiled in Switzerland during the World War.

A new channel for widening the circulation of THE NEW MASSES has proved to be the New York subway. The first young worker to try to sell the magazine in subway trains sold 400 copies the first week, 900 within two or three weeks. College students and others are now being recruited for this work by THE NEW MASSES' distributors, Central Distribution Agency, 52 West 15th Street, New York City.

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NOV 16 1938

"The Underground Speaks"

is the title of the Spivak article that will appear next week in THE NEW MASSES.

Two months before Spivak went to Germany, he was told in Paris that on a certain day he could meet an underground worker in Naziland if he went to a designated cafe and sat at a corner table.

How he met this worker, right in the midst of the Brownshirts—and what the worker turned out to be, is told by Spivak in a breath-taking article which in parts reads like a fascinating detective story. From this leader of the underground movement, Spivak received a picture of the heroic underground work being carried on by the Communists and Socialists and other opposition forces who have made a united front.

"The Underground Speaks" is the first of a series of articles by Spivak from Germany. Covering Europe as roving correspondent for THE NEW MASSES, Spivak has already written of Italy, and will follow up the German dispatches by others from different countries.

To make sure of not missing a single one of these stirring European articles by Spivak, subscribe to THE NEW MASSES—**TODAY!**

JOHN L. SPIVAK

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